



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



Gh
62
945

HARVARD
COLLEGE LIBRARY



FROM THE
HOMERIC COLLECTION
OF
THOMAS YOST COOPER
CLASS OF 1906



Robert Lyke

THE

ODYSSEY OF HOMER.

THE
ODYSSEY OF HOMER

RENDERED INTO ENGLISH VERSE.

BOOKS I. to XII.

BY
G. A. SCHOMBERG, C.B.,
GENERAL.

LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.
1879.

Gh 62.945



LONDON :
PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS,
STAMFORD STREET AND CHARING CROSS.

PREFACE.

I HAVE adopted blank verse for the principal portion of this attempt to render into English the *Odyssey* of Homer, although there are two objections to that metre.

First, the great difficulty of the metre itself.

Second, that even in hands far more able than mine, blank Iambics can hardly give the picturesque variety, and broken light and shadow of the Homeric Hexameter of the *Odyssey*; of which I have endeavoured, how vainly I fear,—to catch some reflection.

But in spite of these objections, faithfulness to the original is the first requisite of a translator, and I am convinced that it is not possible to give a faithful rendering of so long a poem in verse, with the additional burden of rhyme.

For the sake of variety I have introduced the two shorter lays of Demodocus, and the Sirens' song, in rhyming stanzas; these must be considered rather as paraphrases than accurate renderings of the originals. I hope I may lay claim to accuracy and faithfulness for the rest of my work.

I have followed my great master in occasionally and very sparingly, introducing a couplet in rhyme; and have in two or three instances introduced a rhyme in the hemistichs of single verses, of which he has also set the example.

With these few remarks of explanation I offer my attempt to clothe in an English garb the first twelve books of the Odyssey; a poem perhaps more wonderful for its variety and exquisite beauty than any other which the mind of a man has compassed.

March, 1879.

THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK I.

ARGUMENT.

Council of the Gods in Olympus—Minerva visits Telemachus
at Ithaca—The Suitors.

DAY 1.

SING Muse the hero versatile, who roved

So far, so long, after he overthrew

Troy's holy citadel; of many men

He saw the cities, and their manners learned;

And woes he suffered on the deep; he strove 5

To win his comrades' lives, and safe return,

But all his strivings failed to rescue them:

They perished for their witless sacrilege,

Who ate the oxen of Hyperion Sun;

Hence never more saw they their native land. 10

h

B

Daughter of Jove, help us to tell the tale.

All had reached home, escaping war and flood,
Whom sheer destruction spared, save one alone;
Him only—pining for his wife and home,
Calypso, lovely goddess, held enthralled 15
In her arched grots, hoping to win his love.
But when the circling years brought round the time
In which the gods had willed his home return
To Ithaca, not then, e'en midst his friends
Escaped he trials sore; the gods themselves 20
All pitied him, save Neptune; who alone
With unrelenting anger still pursued
Godlike Ulysses, ere he reached his home.

But now the god had gone to Æthiops' land,
The distant Æthiops—whose tribes are twain, 25
One towards the setting, one the rising sun:
There he was present at the sacrifice
Of lambs and oxen, and enjoyed the feast:
Meanwhile the other gods assembled were
In Jove's Olympian halls; when thus to them 30
The father of gods and men to speak began;
For he bethought him of Ægisthus' fate,

Whom Agamemnon's son Orestes slew :

Remembering this, the immortals he addressed :

“How strange it is that mortals throw the blame 35
Of all their ills on us, the gods ; when they
By their misdeeds bring on themselves their woes,
In spite of fate ; 'twas thus Ægisthus stole
The wife of Atreus' son, and murdered him
On his return ; although full well he knew 40
Vengeance awaited him, forewarned by us ;
Who sent to him the watchful Argus-slayer,
Hermes, to bid him not to slay the chief,
Nor violate his wife ; for vengeance sure
Would from Orestes fall when he should reach 45
The prime of youth, and for his birthright long :
Thus counselled Hermes well, but failed to sway
Ægisthus' mind ; who paid full penalty.”

To him blue-eyed Minerva thus replied :

“My Father, son of Saturn, Lord of lords, 50
Under a righteous vengeance has he fallen ;
May all thus perish who commit such crimes !
But for the brave Ulysses aches my heart ;
Ill-fated, far from friends ; he suffers woes

In that green isle, the centre of the deep, 55
Girt round by waters, where the goddess dwells
The child of baleful Atlas; who sees through
The depths of every sea, and who himself
Sustains the mighty pillars which divide
The earth and heaven: his daughter holds enthralled 60
Him the long-suffering and enduring man;
And ever strives with soft and flattering words
To witch him to forget his Ithaca:
In vain, Ulysses pines to see the smoke
Ascending from his home—and then to die! 65
Olympian Jove, does not thy heart relent?
Did not Ulysses often win thy grace
By holy sacrifice on Trojan soil?
Then why pursue him with thy wrath, great Jove?"
He who piles up the thunderclouds replied: 70
"My daughter, what a speech has 'scaped thy lips!
Can I forget the godlike man, who far
Excels his fellow men in intellect,
And in devotion to the immortal gods,
Dwellers in this high heaven above? but Neptune 75
The earth encircler, still is wroth with him,

Because the eye he blinded of the Cyclops,
The giant Polyphemus, mightiest
Of all the race Cyclopiān; whom the nymph
Thoōsa bare to Neptune; she the child 80
Of Phorcys, genius of the lonely sea:
Among the hollow caves she met the god.
On this account earth-shaking Neptune spares
Barely Ulysses' life; and bars him still
From his own native shore; now we in council 85
Assembled, will arrange his home return:
Neptune must stay his anger; he alone
Dare not oppose all the immortal gods."

To him the blue-eyed goddess thus replied:
"My Father, son of Saturn, Lord of lords, 90
If it be pleasing to the blessed gods,
That wise Ulysses to his home return,
Let us dispatch the guiding Argus-slayer,
Hermes, at once to the Ogygian isle;
That to the fair-haired nymph he may announce 95
Our will unalterable; the return
Of the enduring hero to his home:
And I will go to Ithaca, and urge

His son ; and stir his mind to high resolve,
To call the long-haired Greeks to solemn council, 100
And send the suitors packing ; who devour
Wholesale his sheep, and heavy-footed kine.
And he to Sparta and the sandy Pylos
Shall go to learn his much-loved father's fate ;
And thus shall earn bright honour among men." 105

She said, and bound the sandals on her feet,
Wondrous, ambrosial ; that o'er sea and land
Illimitable, bore her like the wind ;
Took, too, her trusty lance with brazen head,
Massive and strong ; with which the warrior hosts 110
She, dreadful goddess, in her wrath lays low :
Down from the Olympian peaks she swooped, and stood
Before Ulysses' gates in Ithaca,
Her brazen lance in hand ; but took
The form of Mentès, of the Taphians chief : 115
And found the noble suitors in the court
Before the palace doors : they played at chess
Lolling on skins of oxen, which themselves
Had slain ; the heralds and domestics busily
Tempered the wine with water in their cups ; 120

The tables, some with sponge absorbent cleanse,
And lay anew ; some carve the mighty joints.

Her presence first Telemachus descried,
As 'mongst the suitors grieving in his heart
He sat, his noble father in his thoughts ; 125

If he should e'er return and drive away
This rabble rout ; and to his home restore
Its rule and honour : thus he sadly thought
Among the crowd, when Pallas he beheld :

He hastened to the threshold, vexed in mind 130

A stranger should be left before the gates
Standing so long ; and drawing near he grasped
Her hand, relieved her of her brazen lance,
And then with winged words addressed her thus :

" Hail, stranger, thou art welcome to our feast, 135
And after tell us what may be thy need."

He said, and led the way ; Minerva followed,
And when they were within the lofty courts,
He placed her lance within the polished niche
Against the springing column ; where reposed 140
Full many a weapon of the absent chief ;
Next led her to a chair, wrought skilfully,

And cushions placed thereon, beneath her feet
A footstool; by her side a couch he placed,
Withdrawn a little from the suitors' throng, 145
Lest by their tumult she should be disturbed,
And thus the feast be irksome to the guest:
For greatly he desired to question her,
And ask for news of his long-absent father.

Meanwhile to wash their hands a serving-maid 150
From a rich golden ewer water poured
Into a silver basin; and laid out
The polished board; the modest stewardess
Served bread and choice of viands from her store
Right willingly; dishes of various sorts 155
The carver laid, and golden cups at hand;
Which speedily the herald filled with wine.

The lordly suitors entered then, and sat
On couches and on chairs, in order due;
The heralds bathed their hands with water next, 160
And serving-maidens bread in baskets brought,
While youths with bumpers filled their brimming cups;
They on the ready viands laid their hands.

When thirst and hunger both were satisfied,

The suitors turned their thoughts to other joys, 165
The song and dance, the crowning of the feast:
And straight the herald placed the graceful harp
In Phemius' hands; who at the suitors' hest
Striking the opening chords, began his song.

To blue-eyed Pallas then Telemachus 170
Addressed his speech, keeping his head near hers,
So that the others should not hear his words:

"Be not offended at my words, dear guest,
The harp and song afford delight to these
Lightly enough; who with impunity 175

Consume the livelihood of him, whose bones
Are whitened by the rain on the lone strand,
Or by the salt sea waves tossed up and down:
But if they saw him in his home again
Their prayers would rather ask for nimbler feet 180
Than greater wealth of gold and worldly store.

But his the bitter fate! and we receive
No comfort; nor does human being tell
One word of his approach and home return.

"But prithee tell me truly whence art thou? 185
And of what state and kindred? in what ship

Hast thou arrived? how did thy sailors guide
Thee here to Ithaca? what race are they?
For well I know on foot thou cam'st not hither:
But speak without reserve, art thou unknown 190
A stranger, or one of my father's friends?
For many visited my father's house,
When his society was sought by men."

To him blue-eyed Minerva thus replied:
"Thy questions I will answer truthfully; 195
I, Mentès, son of brave Anchialus,
Rule o'er the Taphians, skilful oarsmen they:
With my companions I have just arrived
Across the dark blue waters, in our ship,
Visiting people speaking other tongues; 200
My freight of shining iron I would exchange
In Temesa for bronze: my vessel lies
Hauled high upon the beach in Reithron's bay,
Far from thy city; and below the heights
Of Neius, thick with woods: we both can claim 205
Our fathers' friendly intercourse of old:
The aged chief Laertes this can tell
Who now they say visits no more the town;

But far off in the country languishes,
Attended only by his aged servant, 210
Who gives him food and drink, when weariness
O'ercomes his limbs; creeping along the slopes
Of his vine-shadowed garden, far away.

I hither came because report gave out
Thy father's safe return; although the gods 215
His journey bar, Ulysses is not dead,
But living still; within a sea-girt isle
By the broad deep confined, 'midst savage men,
Who still detain the unwilling visitor.
But ne'ertheless to thee I prophesy 220
That which I think the Immortals have decreed,
Although no prophet nor diviner I:
He will not from his own dear native land
Be absent long; though held in iron bonds
He will contrive his own deliverance. 225

But tell me now, in truth and verity
Art thou indeed Ulysses' very son?
In face and piercing eyes thou wondrously
Resemblest him; we as familiar friends
Frequently met ere he embarked for Troy, 230

For the

The day

For well

For speak

A good

For the

When

For

For

For

For

For

For

For

For

For

For

"O stranger, since thou askest, I reply :

When he was yet at home, this household gave
Earnest of wealth and blameless rule ; but now 255

The adverse gods have willed it otherwise ;

For they in mystery have veiled his fate :

I could not grieve if he had met his death

Among his comrades on the plains of Troy,

In friendly arms, the game of war outplayed : 260

For then the Greeks had raised to him a tomb ;

And I, his son, had gained a glorious name.

But him the Harpies now have swept away

Ingloriously, unheard of, and unknown ;

A legacy of sighs and tears he leaves me ! 265

Nor him alone do I bewail ; the gods

Have piled yet other wretched cares on me :

For all the princes of these islands near,

Who in Dulichium and Samé rule,

And in Zacynthus, with its wooded heights, 270

And all the chiefs of craggy Ithaca,

Are suitors to my mother ; and consume

My house and home ; she neither can refuse

Their hateful offers, nor accept their suit ;

Meanwhile they waste and ruin me and mine." 275

With angry pity then Minerva spoke:

"Alas! how much thou need'st the absent chief

To raise his hand against this shameless crew;

Oh! that he stood before his threshold now,

With helm on head, and javelins in hand, 280

In all his strength, as long ago at home

I saw him; when our hospitality

He joyfully received; from Ephyré

He was returning, whither he had gone,

To visit Ilus, son of Mermeres; 285

Thither in his swift bark Ulysses went,

To fetch a deadly poison to anoint

Therewith his brazen arrows; but the chief

Refused to give the poison; for he feared

The wrath of the Immortals; but my father 290

Gave it him, for he loved him wondrously.

Could that Ulysses now be face to face

With all this rabble, swift would be their fate;

Bitter the wedding feast: but this depends

On the gods' will, whether he shall return 295

With vengeance to his home, or whether not.

“ But thee I urge to take the needful steps
To drive this band of suitors from thy palace;
Have courage, and attend to what I say.
To-morrow call the Grecian chiefs to council, 300
And speak thy mind to all; invoke the gods
To witness; urge the suitors to return
Each to his home; thy mother, if her mind
Be set on marriage, also to return
Again to her rich father’s spacious halls, 305
Who will arrange her nuptials, and prepare
A dowry worthy of a much loved child.
And I, if thou wilt be advised by me,
Most strongly urge thee to equip a bark,
The best thou hast, and twenty rowers take 310
And go in quest of thy long absent father;
If any man may tell thee news of him,
Or thou may’st hear a summons sent from Jove,
Which always brings a true report to men.
“ First go to Pylos, question Nestor there; 315
To Sparta next, where Menelaus dwells,
Who of the mailèd Greeks returned the last;
Enquire of them; say they thy father lives

And may return, this persecution yet
Thou may'st put up with for another year : 320
But if thou hearest he is surely dead,
Then to thy much loved native land return,
And on its soil erect his monument,
And duly celebrate his obsequies ;
Thy mother also to a husband give. 325
When thou hast done all this, lay well thy plans
With careful forethought, so that thou may'st slay
The suitors in thy palace ; or oy craft
Or open force ; remember it behoves thee
Henceforth all childish acts to put away ; 330
Hast thou not heard what fame Orestes won,
Because he slew his father's murderer,
The traitorous Ægisthus ? thou, dear youth,
Be brave and trusty, as to look upon
Thou art so comely and so strong of limb, 335
That thy descendants may speak well of thee.

“ But I must seek my bark and comrades now,
Who chafe at my delay ; meanwhile do thou
Act for thyself, and to my words give heed.”

To her the young Telemachus replied : 340

“With kindly feeling hast thou spoken, friend,
As would a father to a son; thy words
I will remember; but I pray thee now
Though eager to depart, remain awhile,
And rest, and with a bath refresh thyself; 345
And then rejoicing thou shalt go on board,
Taking with thee a present rich and rare,
A jewel, such as friends on friends bestow.”

To him blue-eyed Minerva answer made:
“Do not detain me, on my voyage intent: 350
The present which thy friendly wish would give
I willingly will claim on my return,
And carry home; and then thou shalt receive
From me a gift of value equal thine.”

The blue-eyed goddess vanished at these words, 355
And like a falcon upward winged her flight;
With strength and courage she inspired his soul,
And brought his father to his memory
More vividly than erst; his mind with awe
Was shaken, for he recognised the god. 360
Godlike himself, he sought the suitors then:
To these the far-famed minstrel sang; they sat

In listening silence ; in his lay he told
The story of the sad return from Troy,
Which the dread goddess to the Greeks ordained. 365
Icarius' daughter, chaste Penelope,
Retired in her upper chamber heard
The song divine ;—adown the lofty stairs
She swept,—not unattended ;—maidens twain
Followed the lovely lady ; as she reached 370
The suitors, at the threshold of the hall
Of workmanship so exquisite, she paused ;
And o'er her cheeks let down the gauze-like veil :
On either side of her with modest mien,
A maiden stood ; with tears but half restrained 375
She then the godlike minstrel thus addressed :
“ Phemius, thou knowest many a moving lay
Relating to the deeds of gods and men,
Which minstrels make their theme ; sing one of these
While they who listen drink their wine ; but cease 380
From that sad strain, which makes my heart to ache,
Since me it tells of my enduring woe,
And brings that dear one to my memory,
Whose fame through Greece and Argos echoes wide.”

To her Telemachus in answer spoke : 385
"My mother, why the honored minstrel chide,
Who as his spirit prompts him sings his lays ?
No, not the minstrel is to blame, but Jove,
Who skilful men inspireth as he will :
Therefore rebuke him not because he sings, 390
The woes of Greece ; for men approve the song
Which tells to them who listen late events :
Nerve thou thy heart and mind to hear the tale :
'Tis not Ulysses only, who no more
Returns from Troy ; for other chiefs have fallen. 395
Go to thy chamber, and thy household work
Resume once more with distaff and with loom,
Urge on thy maidens to their task ; and leave
Speaking to men, and chief of all to me ;
Who in my palace rightly bear the rule. 400
With wonder she obeyed ; her mind amazed
That thus with prudence and authority
Her youthful son should speak : up to her room
Ascending with her maidens she bewailed
Her husband so beloved, until sweet sleep 405
The blue-eyed goddess on her eyelids cast.

The suitors gathered in the shadowy hall,
Talked loudly to each other; each one claimed
To be the favoured lover; but the youth,
Telemachus, addressed them with this speech: 410
“Ye suitors of my mother, in your pride
So overweening, let us not disturb
The feast we now enjoy with rioting:
’Tis well to listen to the minstrel’s voice,
A minstrel worthy to the gods to sing: 415
To-morrow we will all in counsel meet,
That I may tell you plainly in my speech
To quit my palace; seek your feasts elsewhere,
Or each in turn the others entertain.
But if to you it seemeth good and just 420
Still to consume the livelihood of one,
With no remuneration—no restraint;
Feast on, devour, but I the gods will pray
That Jove may duly recompense your acts
So well deserving vengeance; and that you 425
E’en in these halls may perish unavenged.”

Thus spoke Telemachus, they bit their lips
And gazed with wonder at the daring youth

Who thus addressed them : when Eupheithes' son,
Antinous, in answer spoke to him : 430

“Telemachus, it seems the gods themselves
Have taught thee lofty speech and bold address :
May Jove forbid thy rule in Ithaca !
Of which thou art by birth inheritor.”

Him in reply Telemachus addressed : 435

“Antinous, art thou vexed at what I say ?
I would assume the rule if Jove vouchsafed
To grant it me ; mayhap thou mayst believe
Such lordship a misfortune, not so I :
The rule brings honour with it ; riches too : 440
But many other Grecian chiefs there are
Both young and old in sea-girt Ithaca,
Who might ; my noble father dead ; lay claim
To bear the kingly rule : but of our house
And servants, which Ulysses won for me 445
In war, I claim to be the rightful Lord.”

Eurymachus, the son of Polybus,
In answer then addressed him with these words :
“Telemachus, what Grecian chief may reign
In Ithaca, the Immortals shall dispose : 450

But thy possessions and thy house are thine ;
As long as dwellers are in Ithaca
No man will dare to rob thee of thy right.
But tell me best of friends, about thy guest,
Whence came he here? What country does he claim?
What is his race, and where his patrimony?
Came he to give some message from thy father
Now near at hand? or on his own affairs?
I know not why he left so suddenly
As shunning recognition; there was nought 460
In his appearance that bespoke him mean."

Telemachus the wise, in answer spoke :

"Eurymachus, my father comes no more ;
I trust no more reports, where'er they spring,
Nor heed prognostications, which my mother 465
May draw from seers whom she may summon here,
Within the palace walls : the stranger guest
Mentes, the son of brave Anchialus,
From Taphos comes, and was my father's friend :
He rules the Taphians, skilful oarsmen they." 470

Thus spake he, but her godhead in his mind
He knew full well : meanwhile the others turned

To song and dance till dusky evening fell
Which found them revelling still in these delights
And not till then did each one seek his home. 475
Telemachus then to his chamber hied,
Aloft, above his palace beautiful,
With prospect far and wide; he sought his couch
Revolving in his mind all these events.

The careful handmaid Euryclea child 480
Of Ops, Pisenor's son, attended him,
With kindled torches; her Laertes bought
In bloom of youth, and twenty oxen gave
From his own herds to buy her; whom he held
In equal honor with his modest wife: 485
He never sought her love, for much he feared
The jealousy and anger of his spouse.

She in attendance came and torches bore;
She loved him more than all the other slaves,
Since when a nursling she erst tended him. 490
The door then of the chamber built with skill
He oped, and took his seat upon the couch;
Doffed his soft tunic, placed it in the hands
Of her the aged housewife shrewd in counsel,

And she received and smoothly folded it, 495

And hung the tunic on the peg which stood

Beside his bed-head, carven curiously ;

And left the chamber ; with the silver ring

Closing the door, and with a thong the bolt.

He, lapped in downy wool, the livelong night 500

Reposed ; but ever in his thoughts went o'er

The path on which the goddess bid him tread.

BOOK II.

ARGUMENT.

Council at Ithaca—Telemachus sails for Pylos accompanied by Minerva in the form of Mentor.

DAY 2.

AND when the rosy-fingered dawn appeared,
Born of the early morning, from his couch
Sprang forth Ulysses' son ; his robes he donned,
And o'er his shoulders cast his sword ; and bound
His graceful sandals on his well-shaped feet, 5
And issued from his chamber like a god.
The clear-voiced heralds he commanded straight
To summon all the long-haired Greeks to council ;
Who speedily assembled at their call :
He hastened then to meet them, in his hand 10
His brazen lance ; nor unattended he ;

Two noble hounds his footsteps followed close ;
Upon his mien the goddess shed a grace
Unspeakable ; spellbound the people gazed
In admiration as he came and took 15
His father's chair of state ; which willingly
The elder chieftains yielded as his right.

To them Ægyptius made the opening speech,
The aged hero ; though bowed down by years
Rich in experience ; his beloved son 20
The warrior Antiphus, followed his chief
Noble Ulysses, in the spacious ships
To fight the Trojan chivalry ; him slew,
The savage Cyclops in his vaulted cave,
The last to furnish food for his repast : 25
Three other sons he had, Eurynomus,
A comrade of the suitors, other twain
Followed the father's toil ; who ne'er forgot
The absent one, whom still he mourned and wept.
His tears he mingled with his words, and said : 30
"Hear ye my words, ye men of Ithaca,
No counsel or assembly have we held
Since with his ships Ulysses left these shores :

Who now assembles us? What need constrains
Our summoner? and is he young or old? 35
From early information has he learnt
The news of our returning armament?
Or has he something else to intimate
Touching the public weal? noble he seems
And one to bring a blessing; may Jove grant 40
Accomplishment of all his heart desires."

He spoke, Ulysses' well-belovèd son
Rejoiced to hear these favourable words,
Nor long kept he his seat, he yearned to speak,
And in the midst of the assembly rose: 45
Pisenor, the experienced herald placed
The sceptre in his hand: his words he first
Directed to the aged chief, and said:
"O aged Lord, thou hast not far to seek
Thy summoner; in me behold the man, 50
Whom grief has smitten sore; I have no news
To tell of our returning armament
From early information learnt by me;
Nor have I anything to intimate
Touching the public weal; but of distress 55

Which grievously upon my house has fallen.
Twofold distress; my father I have lost
Who gentle as a father was to you,
Albeit your king: but a worse ill remains
Which utter ruin to my house and home 60
Will swiftly bring: for all the Chieftain's sons
Who dwell around, flock here to urge their suit
Persistently on my unwilling mother:
And these same men would sorely loathe to seek
Icarius, her father's house, to ask 65
That with a dower he would his daughter give
To whom his will and favor might incline.
But these come thronging daily to our house;
Oxen, and sheep, and goats they sacrifice;
And feast, and drink, with neither cost nor stint 70
The sparkling wine; waste swallows up our all:
We lack a man such as Ulysses was
To ward away this curse from house and home.
Powerless indeed we are, and miserable;
Skill-less in self-defence we e'er shall be: 75
O would that I possessed such skill and power!
But deeds no longer to be borne are done:

My house is ruthlessly destroyed; yourselves
Should anger feel for me, and be ashamed
That people dwelling near should see these wrongs. 80
Moreover dread the vengeance of the gods,
Who may inflict some heavy chastisement,
Looking with horror on these evil deeds.
Friends, I entreat you by Olympian Jove,
And Themis, who assembles and dissolves 85
All solemn councils, spare me; undisturbed,
Leave me to suffer in my bitter woe:
Unless perhaps my father, good Ulysses,
Have evil wrought upon the mailèd Greeks:
Then injuries from him, with injury 90
Repay on me; and urge these plunderers on.
'Twere better far for me did you yourselves
Consume my cattle and my goods: from you
Redress without delay I could obtain;
For then throughout the city we would go 95
As suppliants, entreating restitution;
Till fully made: but now by favouring these,
Woes without cure ye heap upon my soul."

Thus spoke he wrathfully; and on the ground

His sceptre threw, tears springing to his eyes: 100

Compassion seized his hearers; silent all;

None ventured to reply with bitter words.

Antinous alone in answer spoke:

“Restrain thy wrath, young orator; thy words

Reproach and shame attempt to fix on us; 105

Yet we, the suitors, are not culpable,

But thy beloved mother, and her craft,

Consummate: for three years have passed away,

And now almost the fourth, since she began

Her coquetry to practise on us chiefs: 110

Hope she extends, and flattering promises,

To all; with other projects in her heart.

This stratagem moreover she contrived;

A mighty loom was in her chamber placed,

Broad and extensive was the web, and fine; 115

This she began to weave, and said to us:

‘Young princes, suitors mine, I you implore

Though dead my husband be, that ye refrain

From urging on my nuptials, till this robe

I shall complete (lest all the threads be wasted); 120

Intended for Laertes’ winding sheet;

er's prayers

s' curse :

ce too

you, 170

elsewhere ;

ood

ie,

175

will pray

ur acts,

hat ye

enged !"

pter 180

on high

th they flew

atched wings ;

y, hovering,

s they beat 185

atening gaze

destruction ;

D

And craftiness; in which we never heard
That any of the fair-haired Grecian women 145
Of former days; not Tyro, nor Alcmena,
Nor fair Mycene with the graceful wreath;
Not one of these, could with Penelope
Contend in stratagem: but her devices
Have little vantage won, and still thy goods 150
And livelihood will be consumed by us,
As long as she retains the mind and purpose
Which in her breast the gods have placed; this brings
To her renown; but loss of all to thee!
In truth we go not hence until she choose 155
One of us Grecian princes for her spouse.”

Telemachus, the wise in answer spoke:

“Antinous, I cannot from our house
Thrust her by force, who bare and nourished me;
My father far away in foreign lands, 160
Be he alive or dead: Icarius,
If I of my own will should send away
My mother, heavy vengeance would inflict:
Nor would her father only punish me,
The gods would also visit me with ill: 165

For driven from her home, my mother's prayers

On me would bring the hateful Furies' curse :

And men would hold me in abhorrence too

No, never can I utter such a word !

But if a sense of shame remain with you, 170

Quit ye my palace ; seek your feasts elsewhere ;

Or each in turn the others entertain.

But if to you it seemeth just and good

Still to consume the livelihood of one,

With no remuneration, no restraint ; 175

Feast on—devour ; but I the gods will pray

That Jove may duly recompense your acts,

So well deserving vengeance : and that ye

E'en in these halls may perish unavenged !"

Thus spake Telemachus, when Jupiter 180

All seeing, from the mountain peak on high

Two eagles sent ; on the wind's breath they flew

Close to each other, borne on outstretched wings ;

And when they reached the assembly, hovering,

They circled ; and with rapid strokes they beat 185

Their wings together ; and with threatening gaze

Above the heads of all, they looked destruction ;

Tearing each other's neck with beak and claw ;
Then turning to the right they swooped athwart
The city and its houses : all with dread 190
The birds surveyed, and wondered in their thoughts
What they portended : Halitherses then
The aged hero, Mastor's son, addressed them ;
Skilled more than all was he the flights of birds
To read aright, and omens to interpret : 195
He of his wise good will thus spoke, and said :
"Hear what I say, ye men of Ithaca ;
To you, O suitors, I address these words
Most earnestly ; for now above your heads
A mighty ruin hangs ; Ulysses now 200
Is not far distant from his home and friends ;
But close at hand slaughter and death prepares
For all of you ; on many others too
Who dwell in Ithaca, will evil fall :
Let us take means the suitors to restrain ; 205
Unless perchance they prudently break off
Their courtship ; which were better far for them :
For not in vain do I now prophesy,
But well I know what doom is imminent ;

I say that all in him is now fulfilling 210

Which I foretold Ulysses, when the Greeks

And he embarked, and sailed for Ilium :

I said that he would suffer many woes,

His comrades lose; and in the twentieth year

Would to his home return unrecognised : 215

And now I say all this will come to pass."

Eurymachus to him in answer spoke :

"Old man, go home, and to thy children prate

Thy warnings, that they shun the coming ill ;

In this I am a better seer than thou : 220

Though birds in numbers through the sunny air

Disport themselves, not omens are they all :

Dead is Ulysses, and afar; 'twere well

That thou hadst perished too; so were we spared

Thy wondrous prophecies; nor couldst thou then 225

Stir up Telemachus to wrath, and gain

The bribe that he may give thee for thy pains.

And now I tell thee what will surely be ;

If thou, a man of wise experience,

Stir up this youth to scold with bitter words, 230

First upon him will ill results ensue ;

For he can naught effect 'gainst all of us :
And next on thee old man, we will inflict
A heavy penalty ; which to repay
Will vex thy soul, and cause thee sharp regret : 235
Telemachus himself I counsel too,
Before you all, to urge upon his mother
To go hence to her father ; who will make
Arrangements for her nuptials, and prepare
A dowry worthy of a much-loved child. 240
For well I am assured we Grecian chiefs
Will not draw back from our persistent courtship :
No one we dread ; no, not Telemachus
Spite of his talk ; nor do we heed one whit
The idle prophecy thou utterest 245
Old dotard ; kindling deeper wrath in us :
Still to his loss this feasting will go on ;
Nor order reign, as long as she delays
To marry one of us : from day to day
Moreover we will wait on her decision ; 250
And strive to win her preference ; nor seek
Another spouse ; since it may well befall
To any one of us to marry her."

Telemachus the prudent youth replied :
"Eurymachus, no more will I address 255
Thee and the other noble suitors now
In terms of supplication ; for the gods
And all the Greeks the circumstances know.
But give me now a bark with twenty comrades,
To bring me on the way that I would go : 260
I am for Sparta and the sandy Pylos,
To seek for news of my long-absent father ;
If any one may tell me news of him,
Or I may hear a rumour sent from Jove,
Which always brings a true report to men. 265
Then should I hear my father is alive,
And may come back to us : though hard to bear
This for another year I will endure :
But if I hear that he is surely dead,
I straight will to my native land return ; 270
Upon its cherished soil erect his tomb,
And duly celebrate his obsequies ;
And then my mother to a husband give."
He spoke and took his seat ; then next arose
Mentor, who was Ulysses' trusty friend ; 275

To whom embarking in his ships he gave
The care of all his household; to obey
The aged chief, and all in order guard:
Who in his ripe experience spoke and said:

“Hear what I say, ye men of Ithaca; 280

Let not the sceptre-bearing chief henceforth,
Be mild and gentle; let him not regard
Justice, but let him rather be severe;
Lawless his acts; not thus the godlike chief

Ulysses ruled his people: who by them 285
Should be remembered as a tender father.

On the young suitors no reproach I cast,
Who stake their heads upon their evil deeds,
And waste the household of the absent chief,
Believing that he never will return: 290

But you his subjects bitterly I blame;
Though strong in numbers, mute, unmoved ye sit,
Nor these few suitors check ye with a word.”

Leiocritus, Euénor's son, thus spoke:

“Injurious Mentor! what a speech hast thou 295

Misleading uttered; urging these to spoil
Our projects, and our courtship to restrain!

Against such odds 'tis idle to contend,
And stir up strife, all for a peaceful feast:
For if Ulysses should himself appear, 300
Hero of Ithaca, among us now,
Determined to drive out us noble suitors,
Now feasting in his halls; I think his wife
Though eagerly desiring his return,
Would not rejoice; but dread the bitter fate 305
Awaiting him in contest with us all.
Therefore thy speech lacks reason; now at once
Ye people, go about your own affairs:
Mentor and Halithuses, who of old
Have been his father's friends, will help this youth 310
Upon his journey: I for my part think,
He will still wait for news in Ithaca,
And never make the voyage he now intends."

Thus spoke he, and the council was dissolved
Without delay; each sought his own abode: 315
The suitors to Ulysses' palace went.

Telemachus, then bent his steps afar,
Along the shore; and in the salt sea waves
Bathing his hands, to Pallas made his prayer:

"Help me, O god who camest yesterday 320
To visit our abode; and didst command
That I should sail o'er the cloud-shadowed deep,
And seek for news of my long-absent father:
The Greeks oppose my journey; most of all
The suitors, in their evil arrogance." 325

As thus he prayed, Pallas herself drew near;
The form and voice of Mentor she assumed,
And thus addressed him with these wing'd words:
"Telemachus, thou wilt be neither base
Nor void of sense, if thou inheritest 330
Thy father's firm resolve; but thou as he
Wilt surely carry out thy words and deeds:
Thy path will never fail to reach its end.
But if thou art not truly sprung from him
And from Penelope, no longer then 335
I entertain the hope that thou wilt bring
Thy plans to full effect: few sons there be
Who with their fathers can compare in worth;
Most are inferior far; but few indeed
Ever surpass their fathers' excellence: 340
But as thou art not base, nor void of wit,

Nor of thy father's wisdom quite bereft,
My hope is thy designs will be fulfilled.
The projects of these suitors let alone;
Senseless, with no regard for right or wrong, 345
They little know the dreadful fate and death
Now at their elbow; and that in one day
They all shall fall: thou also art not far
From starting on the way that thou wouldst go:
I, who have ever been thy father's friend, 350
A trusty galley will for thee procure;
And will myself accompany thy voyage.
Now go, and 'midst the suitors show thyself;
Then in thy house victuals in store prepare;
Both wine in jars, and barley, staff of life, 355
In wallets strong: while I among the people
Our willing comrades will collect with speed:
For ships there are in sea-girt Ithaca
In numbers, new and old; of these the best
I will equip, and launch her in the deep." 360
Thus spake Minerva, child of Jove; nor long
The youth delayed, hearing the goddess' words.
With saddened heart, he sought again his home:

He found the suitors busily employed
In flaying goats, and singeing fatted swine, 365
In the forecourt: Antinous smiling met
Telemachus; and grasped him by the hand,
And called him kindly by his name, and said:

“Telemachus, thou youth of lofty speech,
Restrain thy wrath; nor aught allow of ill 370
In word or deed to rankle in thy breast;
But eat and drink with me as thou wast wont.
The Greeks will give thee all thou dost demand,
A ship, and chosen crew; that thou may'st go
At once to sacred Pylos, and enquire 375
If of thy noble father news there be.”

Telemachus, the prudent youth replied:
“Antinous, 'tis not for me to mix
In your rude revelry against my will;
Nor sad and silent, join in your carouse: 380
It surely was enough that ye should waste
My goodly household when I was a child:
But now I am a man, and ask and hear
What others say of this, my spirit swells
Within me; and I am resolved to try 385

How I a dark revenge on you may wreak ;
Whether I wend to Pylos or stay here.
To go I am determined, and the voyage
On which I venture will not fruitless be ;
E'en if a passenger I find my way ; 390
Having no ship or crew at my command,
A lack of mine which seems a gain for you."

He said, and from Antinous' grasp withdrew
His hand : meanwhile the suitors through the halls
Were busied with the feast ; with bitter jibes 395
They taunted him ; and one in scorn thus spoke :
"Telemachus our ruin meditates
Without a doubt ; and will allies collect
From sandy Pylos, and from Sparta ; whither
He is so madly bent on voyaging now : 400
Perchance to Ephyré he'll find his way,
The fruitful ; and fetch deadly poison thence,
Wherewith to drug our cups, and slay us all."

Another of these scornful youths rejoined :
"Ah ! but who knows, if once shipped off to sea, 405
He may not, like his father, far from friends
Wander to his destruction ? which would be

For us a great addition to our trouble ;
As we should have to share his household goods,
And give his house to him who wins his mother." 410

Thus said they ; he meanwhile his footsteps bent
Down to his father's treasure chamber ; vast
And lofty-roofed ; where gold and bronze were piled
In heaps ; and garments folded lay in chests ;
With plenteous stores of fragrant olive oil ; 415
And casks of old and luscious wine were ranged
Along the wall ; the liquor they contained
Divine and pure, stood there in readiness,
Whene'er the chief should to his home return.
The double gates were made secure with bolts 420
Close fitted ; and within the stewardess,
The handmaid Euryclea, child of Ops,
Took charge of all the treasures night and day,
With large experienced care : Telemachus,
Her having summoned, with these words addressed : 425
"Dear nurse, now quickly draw for me in jars
The richest and best flavoured wine thou hast,
Save that reserved for him, the wretched one !
My noble father ; should he e'er return

To us, escaping misery and death! 430

Fill me twelve jars, with covers fitted all;

And twenty measures of pure barley meal,

In strong and well-sewn skins prepare for use:

Let no one know my purpose but thyself:

Have all these ready, and at eventide, 435

What time my mother seeks her couch above,

I will remove them all; for I intend

To sail for Sparta and the sandy Pylos,

To seek for news of my beloved father."

Thus said he, and his loving nurse was grieved, 440

And mingled with her tears these winged words:

"Beloved child, whence comes this wayward scheme?

And why shouldst thou, much loved and only one,

This weary journey go? Thy noble father

Has perished in a stranger land afar; 445

And evil plotters will contrive with craft

Thy sure destruction when thou leav'st thy home;

And share all these thy treasures as their spoil:

Do thou remain at home, and guard thine own;

There is no cause that thou shouldst suffer woes, 450

In wandering far upon the lonely sea."

In answer thus the prudent youth replied :
"Courage good nurse, my projects do not lack
A god's approval ; but now swear to me
That thou wilt not reveal them to my mother, 455
Until eleven days, or twelve have passed ;
Except she miss me, and become informed
Of my departure otherwise : that tears
May not disfigure her fair countenance."

Thus said he, and the aged servant swore 460
The oath before the gods which he required :
And straightway then she filled the jars with wine ;
And barley-meal prepared, in well-sewn skins.
Telemachus his palace sought again,
And mingled with the suitors as before. 465

The blue-eyed goddess other plans contrived ;
In likeness of Telemachus she sought
The city round ; and urged each favouring chief
To meet her ready to embark at eve,
On board a trusty ship ; the ship she asked 470
Noëmon, son of Phronius, to provide ;
To which request he yielded willingly.
Sun set, and shadows fell athwart the streets ;

The good ship in the deep was launched, and stored
With all which vessels well equipped could need ; 475
Within the harbour's furthest point she lay ;
The gallant crew assembled on the beach,
Each one of them the goddess stirred with zeal.

Anon fresh schemes the blue-eyed goddess planned :
She sought Ulysses' palace, and the spell 480
Of gentle slumber on the suitors cast ;
Confused them as they drank, and from their hands
The goblets smote : they wearied sought repose
Throughout the city ; nor awaited long ;
For sleep upon their eyelids swiftly fell. 485
The goddess then assumed the form and voice
Of Mentor, and Telemachus addressed ;
And called him thus outside his palace walls :
" Telemachus, thy comrades ready armed
Sit to their oars, awaiting thy approach : 490
Now forward ! let us on without delay."

Thus Pallas spoke, and led the way at once,
And he the goddess' footsteps followed close :
And when they reached the ship, and waterside,
They found the long-haired warriors on the beach ; 495

Telemachus with ardor them addressed :

“ My brave companions, help me now to store
Our ship with victuals ; all are now prepared,
And ready in the hall ; our plan none knows,
No, not my mother nor her maids, save one ; 500
A trusty one, who my commands obeyed.”

He spoke, and hastened on : they followed him,
And bore the stores on board the galley trim,
Obedient to Ulysses' much loved son,
Telemachus then stepped on board himself ; 505
Minerva led the way, and at the stern
Assumed her place ; the youth sat by her side.

The hawsers off they cast, and on the thwarts
The oarsmen eager sat ; a favoring breeze
The blue-eyed goddess sent from out the West, 510
Which freshly rustled o'er the dark blue sea.

Telemachus then urged the ready crew
To fit the tackle to the favoring gale :
The pine-wood mast they raised and firmly placed
Within its step, and steadied it with shrouds ; 515
And with the halyards, made of twisted hide,
They hoisted the white sails, which the wind swelled ;

Around the stem of the swift rushing ship,
The purple wave resounded lustily,
As through the seething deep she clove her way. 520
When all was made secure on board the ship,
So gallant and so trim; they filled with wine
Their overflowing goblets; which they quaffed,
Making libations to the immortal gods,
And chiefly to the blue-eyed child of Jove: 525
Through all the night, till dawn they held their course.

BOOK III.

ARGUMENT.

Telemachus at Pylos—Nestor gives a narrative of the return of the Greeks after the Trojan war, and of the treachery of Ægisthus—Telemachus starts for Sparta, accompanied by Nestor's youngest son—Pisistratus.

DAYS 3-5.

THE sun arose above the gleaming main
 Into the luminous sky, and shed his light
O'er the rejoicing earth on gods and men,
When they arrived at Neleus' citadel;
The well-built Pylos; where upon the shore 5
The people were engaged in offering
A sacrifice of bulls, all sable hued,
To the Earth-shaker with the dark brown locks.
Nine seats there were, five hundred sat on each;
For each of which nine bulls were sacrificed: 10

The inner parts they tasted then, and burnt

The haunches to the god with solemn rites.

The swift ship neared the shore, they furled her sails
And moored her safely next, and disembarked.

Telemachus himself the galley left, 15

Minerva led the way; and then the youth

The blue-eyed goddess with these words addressed:

“Telemachus, now is no time to show

False modesty, nor shouldst thou hesitate

To make enquiries on what foreign soil 20

Thy father lies; or what has been his fate;

For therefore hast thou sailed across the sea:

But straightway to the valiant Nestor go,

That we may quickly his opinion learn;

Beg him to tell thee all he knows in truth, 25

He is too wise to speak misleading words!”

The prudent youth in answer thus replied:

“O Mentor, how can I address the chief

Who lack experience of skilful speech?

A youth should be restrained by modesty 30

From questioning a man of riper age.”

The blue-eyed goddess straightway then replied:

“Telemachus, thou wilt think otherwise,
A god will give thee skilful utterance:
I trow indeed that thou hast not been born 35
Nor bred without the favour of the gods.”

Thus Pallas spake, and led the way forthwith,
And he the goddess' footsteps followed close:
The gathering of the Pylians soon they reached,
Where Nestor sat among his sons; around 40
His friends were busy with the festival;
Some for the spit prepare, some roast the joints.

Soon as the strangers they descried, in crowds
They flocked to welcome them with ready hands;
And pressed them to be seated eagerly. 45

Pisistratus, the son of Nestor, first
Drew near and took the hand of each of them,
And at the feast invited them to sit
On carpets soft and woolly, on the sand,
Close by his brother Thrasymedes' side, 50
And next his father; and before them placed
The first choice morsels; in a golden cup
The wine he poured; and then to welcome them
Minerva he addressed, the child of Jove:

"Now to the ruler Neptune pray, O guest ; 55
For his the feast that thou hast chanced to meet
In coming hither ; and when thou hast prayed
And poured libation, as the custom is,
Give to this youth the cup of luscious wine,
That he libation make ; for sure I am 60
That he the gods will willingly adore ;
All mortals yearn towards the immortal gods.
As he my fellow is in time of life,
Younger than thou, I give the preference,
And first to thee the golden beaker pass." 65

Thus saying in her hands he placed the cup
Of fragrant wine ; well pleased the goddess was
With him the just and understanding man,
Because he first to her the chalice gave ;
Straightway she prayed to Neptune fervently : 70
"Hear me, O Neptune, Shaker of the Earth ;
Fulfil all our desires who pray to thee ;
Adorn with honor Nestor and his sons ;
To all the Pylians who this offering make,
A princely hecatomb, thy favor grant ; 75
Grant also to Telemachus and me

Return, with all the purposes fulfilled

For which we sailed here in our dark swift ship."

Thus prayed she, and accomplished her own prayer ;

The double goblet to Telemachus 80

She passed ; then prayed Ulysses' much loved son.

When they the joints had roasted and prepared

They served them, and commenced the stately feast.

When thirst and hunger both were satisfied,

Gerenian Nestor thus began to speak : 85

"Now that the strangers have regaled themselves,

'Tis the fit time to ask them who they are :

Strangers, who are ye ? o'er the watery waste

Whence have ye sailed ? arrive ye here by chance,

Or by design ? as corsairs on the sea 90

Risk ye your lives to plunder foreign lands ?"

Telemachus, emboldened then replied,

Pallas herself with courage him inspired,

That he should ask about his absent father,

And thus should earn bright honor among men : 95

"O son of Neleus, glory of the Greeks,

Thou askest whence we are ; which I will tell :

We from the port of Ithaca have sailed

Which under Neius lies ; and my affairs
Are of my own, not public interest. 100
I seek for news of my unhappy father,
God-like Ulysses ; world wide is his fame ;
Who warring at thy side, they say, o'erthrew
With thee the Trojans' city : we have heard
Where all the other chiefs who fought at Troy 105
And perished, met their doom : his fate alone
The son of Saturn shrouds in mystery ;
For none can plainly tell us where he fell :
Whether on land, slain by the enemy,
Or tossed about by Amphitrité's waves. 110
Therefore I beg thee as a suppliant
To tell me if thou know'st his dismal fate :
If thou with thine own eyes hast seen, or heard
From any traveller aught concerning him :
In truth his mother brought him forth for woe ! 115
Let not thy pity spare or soften aught,
But tell me plainly all that thou hast seen.
I pray thee, if my father, brave Ulysses,
Have ever stood by thee in word and deed,
And done good service in the Trojans' land, 120

Where ye the Greeks suffered so many woes;
Call this to mind, and tell me now the truth."

The knight, Gerenian Nestor, then replied:

"Dear youth, thou dost remind me of the woe
We warrior Greeks in that far land endured, 125
With steadfast soul; how o'er the gloomy sea
We sailed for booty where Achilles led;

How for King Priam's famous citadel

We fought: there fell the bravest of the brave!
There warlike Ajax lies; and there Achilles; 130

Patroclus there, the prudent counsellor;

There my beloved son, the good and strong,

Antilochus; so brave, so swift of foot!

The ills we suffered there, ah! who could tell?

If for five years, or more, thou questioned me 135

As to the ills the godlike Greeks endured,

Wearied thou wouldst to thine own home return,

Ere thou hadst heard of all we suffered there.

Nine years we wove our toils around the foe,

And hardly Jove allowed our craft to win: 140

Godlike Ulysses there excelled us all

In warlike stratagems; none rivalled him,

Thy father; if indeed thou art his son :
But wonder holds me chained in seeing thee !
So like in speech ! in truth no one could say 145
A youth could thus in voice resemble him.

“ In public and in secret council there
We never differed, the great chief and I ;
But ever with one mind advised the Greeks
With prudence, and far-seeing thoughtfulness, 150
What should the most for their advantage be.
But when the lofty stronghold was o’erthrown
Of Priam, and we in our ships embarked,
A god then scattered us the Greeks ; and Jove
Calamities on our return ordained : 155
All were not just and wise : a fearful doom
On many lighted, from the baleful wrath
Of her, the blue-eyed child of dreadful Jove ;
Who raised a strife betwixt the Atreidian chiefs ;
They both assembled all the Greeks in council, 160
Not in due order, unadvisedly ;
At sunset, an unwonted time : the Greeks
Came overcome with wine ; to them the chiefs
Spoke to explain why they were called together :

Then Menelaus urged upon the Greeks 165
At once to undertake their home return,
Across the broad expanse of the salt flood :
This Agamemnon greatly disapproved ;
He willed delay ; to offer sacrifice
Of hecatombs, in order to appease 170
Minerva's awful wrath : fool not to know
How vain his prayers ; and that the immortal gods
Not lightly from their purposes are turned.
Thus stood these two opposed, and bitter words
Exchanged ; with uproar wild the mailèd Greeks 175
Broke up the council, discord in their minds.
All night we rested, brooding evil thoughts
Against each other ; for thus Jupiter
A retribution for our sins prepared.
At dawn part launched their ships, and placed on
board 180
Their goods, and lovely women ; spoils of war :
But half the people stayed behind, and held
With Agamemnon, shepherd of the flock ;
While half of us embarked, and put to sea.
Swiftly we sailed ; for o'er the boundless deep 185

A godhead smoothed our path: to Tenedos
We came, and to the gods made sacrifice,
Eager for home; but adverse Jupiter
Was unpropitious to our home return,
And raised a second discord in our fleet. 190
Some with the prince Ulysses sage in counsel,
Turned back the galleys, swinging to the oar,
And Agamemnon sought to join again:
But I, with all the ships which followed me
Sped onwards; for I knew a deity 195
Threatened with ill: on sped the warlike son
Of Tydeus; and his comrades urged to haste:
And shortly after, brown-haired Menelaus
Followed; and us at Lesbos joined again:
Where we were doubting on our longer course; 200
Whether to steer above the rugged Chios,
To Psyria's isle, and keep it on our left;
Or under Chios hold our course towards
The windy Mimas; and we asked the god
To give an omen to direct our choice: 205
Which he vouchsafed; and to Eubœa's isle
He urged us through mid-sea to cut our way;

And thus we quickly should escape disaster.

“Shrill sang the favoring breeze; swiftly we ran
Across the waters where the sea fish play; 210
And ere night fell we reached Geræstus’ shore:
To Neptune many bulls we offered there,
Thankful that we had crossed the mighty deep.
On the fourth day it was, that Diomed,
Tamer of horses, and his comrades, brought 215
Their gallant ships to Argos: I stood on
For Pylos; steady held the breeze, nor fell
Since first the god vouchsafed to send its breath.

“Thus uninformed, dear youth, I reached my home,
Of whom among the Greeks were saved or lost: 220
The rumours I have in my palace heard
’Tis right that thou shouldst know, and I will tell.

“They say the gallant Myrmidons reached home
Led by the brave Achilles’ noble son;
And Philoctetes, son of Poeas too; 225
Idomeneus brought all his comrades back
To Crete in safety, who escaped from war;
Nor did the sea rob one from off his roll:
And thou hast heard how Atreus’ son arrived,

And how Ægisthus compassed his destruction ; 230

For which a vengeance dread on him has fallen.

How fortunate, that he thus slain should leave

A son behind him, to exact revenge

On that fell traitor who his father slew.

And thou, dear youth, whom now I thus behold 235

So gallant and so strong, be brave and trusty ;

That thy descendants may speak well of thee."

Telemachus the wise, in answer spoke :

"Renown'd Nestor, glory of the Greeks,

Right well the avenger has requited him : 240

To future generations, will the Greeks

Record his widespread fame ; oh ! that the gods

Had granted me like power, to recompense

My mother's suitors for their shameful acts ;

Who, in their haughty disregard of me, 245

Contrive their plots : the gods have not decreed

Like favor for my father, or for me ;

With patience we must all this evil bear."

Then Nestor the Gerenian Knight replied ;

"Since thou this subject hast recalled to mind, 250

Dear youth ; they say the suitors in thy halls

Come thronging for thy mother ; and contrive
Their evil plots against thee ; tell me now
All this dost thou put up with willingly ?
Or are thy people hostile to thy cause, 255
Led by some oracle divine ? for who
Can surely tell, if either thou alone,
Or thou with all the Greeks assisting thee,
May'st punish yet their lawless outrages ?
Oh ! that blue-eyed Minerva would vouchsafe 260
To favor thee, as erst on Trojan soil,
Where we the Greeks so many ills endured,
She fostered with her care thy noble father !
For never have I seen so manifest,
Here on this earth, gods favoring mortal men, 265
As the great goddess Pallas, manifest,
Stood ever by his side defending him :
If she would only thee vouchsafe to tend
With equal care ; then many a one of these
His wooing would right joyfully forego." 270

The prudent youth in answer thus replied :
" O venerable chief, I do not think
Thy speech can find fulfilment ; vast indeed,

Such an emprise! amazement seizes me!
I could not dare to hope for such success, 275
Not even if the gods vouchsafed their aid."

The blue-eyed goddess then addressed him thus:
"Telemachus, what words have 'scaped thy lips?
A god, if so he will, from far can save;
I would prefer to bear unnumbered woes, 280
And these endured, then win my home return,
To such a fate as Agamemnon's was;
Who safely journeyed home, but on his hearth
Was slaughtered by that traitor and his wife.
'Tis true the gods themselves cannot defend 285
A favored mortal from the common lot,
Death; when inevitable fate decrees
That he must yield at length to death's long sleep."

Telemachus, the prudent youth, replied:
"O Mentor, let us speak no more of this, 290
Of grievous import though it be to us;
For him there is no prospect of return,
But a sad fate the gods for him decree.
Now on another subject I desire
The chief to question; since all other men 295

In wisdom, and in knowledge, he excels;
Over three generations has he ruled;
Thus an immortal seems to meet my eyes
When I behold him. Nestor, wilt thou say
How mighty Agamemnon met his fate? 300
Where then was Menelaus? by what means
Did fell Ægisthus compass his destruction;
A better, and a braver man than he?
Was Menelaus then in Grecian Argos?
Or where afar was he a wanderer 305
That thus the traitor dared to slay the chief?"
To him Gerenian Nestor thus replied:
"All this, dear youth, I will to thee relate:
Thou hast thyself divined how this befell;
If Menelaus, on his way from Troy, 310
Had found Ægisthus in his halls alive,
When dead, no earth had covered his remains;
But him the dogs and vultures had devoured,
Far from the city, on the dreary waste;
Nor him the Grecian women had bewept, 315
For he designed a most atrocious act;
While we afar hardships and war endured,

He in the heart of fertile Argos dwelt
In peace; and tempted Agamemnon's wife
With all the spells of soft and witching words. 320
At first the lovely Clytemnestra loathed
His vile proposals; for her mind was formed
For purity by nature; by her side
A faithful minstrel watched; to whom the chief
Sailing for Troy, with many anxious words, 325
The guarding of his consort had consigned.

“But when the fates had willed that she should yield,
He forced the minstrel to a desert isle,
And left him there a prey for noisome birds.
Then he too willing, her, right willing brought 330
Home to his palace: on the altars then
He many haunches burnt, and offerings made
Of treasures, sacred garments, and of gold;
Her having won whom he ne'er hoped to win.

“Then Atreus' son and I in friendly wise, 335
Sailing together, made our voyage from Troy;
And when at holy Sunium we arrived,
The cape of Athens, there Apollo smote
King Menelaus' pilot; slaying him,

With painless arrows, and a gentle death ; 340
Even as the helm of the swift rushing ship
He held within his hands: Phrontis his name,
Onetor's son ; who with surpassing skill
Could guide a ship amidst the driving storms.
Thus he delayed, though eager to depart, 345
And there performed his comrade's obsequies.
But when at last across the purple deep
He sailed with his stout ships, they swiftly ran
Their course towards Maleia's lofty cape ;
But there all-seeing Jove prepared for him 350
A troubled voyage ; loud roared the tempest's blast,
And giant waves like mountains then arose ;
The fleet were scattered ; some drew near to Crete,
Where the Cydónes dwell, around the streams
Of Jardānus : where Gortys' farthest cape 355
Meets with the stormy deep, there rises sheer
A scarp'd rock from out the salt sea flood ;
Along its face sinister the South wind
The swelling billow towards Phæstus rolls,
Thus a small rock hems in the mighty wave ; 360
Thither they drove ; and hardly could the crews

Escape destruction ; but the ships were wrecked
And stranded on the rocks ; five dark prowed ships,
The rest, the wind and waves to Egypt bore :
There among people speaking other tongues 365
Long wandered Menelaus with his ships ;
Collecting gold and treasures on his way.

“Meanwhile Ægisthus consummated then
At home his wretched crimes : seven years he ruled
Mycenæ rich in gold ; Atreides slain : 370
The people too submitted to his sway.
But woefully for him, in the eighth year
Noble Orestes back from Athens came,
And slew his honored father’s murderer.
Then to the Argives, he, the slayer gave 375
A feast to celebrate the obsequies
Of base Ægisthus, and his wretched mother.
And Menelaus on that day arrived,
He of the cheering war-cry in the fight ;
With treasures which his laden vessels bore. 380

“Now thee dear youth, I counsel not to rove
Far from thy home, leaving thy goods behind,
With these disdainful men ; who will not fail

Among them to devour all that thou hast;
So thou a bootless errand wilt have gone. 385
But I advise, and strongly urge on thee
To go to Menelaus, who has come
Lately from foreign lands, and tribes of men
From whence he never dared to hope return,
When once the storms had swept him far away 390
Into a mighty sea; so dread, so vast,
Even the wild birds cannot wing their flight
Across its broad expanse within the year.
But go now with thy ship, and with thy crew;
Or if thou shouldst prefer by land to go 395
Chariot and horses ready are for thee;
And thee my sons will readily escort,
To Lacedæmon and brown Menelaus;
Beg him to tell thee all he knows in truth,
He is too wise to speak misleading words." 400

Thus said he, set the sun, and twilight fell:
The blue-eyed goddess then addressed them thus:
"Right justly hast thou spoken, aged chief:
But now at once cut out the victims' tongues,
And mix the wine, that we libations pour 405

To Neptune, and the other blessed gods;
Then 'twill be time to think of our repose;
Already has the light sunk in the West:
We should not sit and make a long carouse
When to the gods a feast we celebrate." 410

Thus spake the child of Jove, and they obeyed;
Their hands with water then the heralds bathed,
The youths to overflowing filled the bowls,
And passed the wine in goblets round to all:
Next in the fire the victims' tongues they cast, 415
And rising to their feet libations poured:
When they had drunk as much as they desired,
The goddess and Telemachus prepared
To bend their steps toward their roomy ship;
But Nestor stopped them with these eager words: 420
"Now Jove and all the immortal gods forbid
That ye should seek repose within your ship,
Away from me; as if in utter want,
Nor robes nor cushions could my house afford,
On which my friends and I could softly sleep: 425
But robes and cushions fine and soft I have
Here in my house; nor shall the cherished son

Of my heroic friend be forced to lie
On his ship's deck, while I am yet alive,
And while my sons are left within my halls, 430
To welcome friends who visit my abode."

Him then the blue-eyed goddess thus addressed :
"Thou speakest well, O venerable chief;
Telemachus will do as thou hast said,
And follow thee and sleep within thy halls : 435
But I must seek again my black hulled ship ;
And stir the crew and give them my commands :
For I alone am well advanced in years,
And all the others far more youthful are,
Who with affection follow this brave youth ; 440
And fellows are in time of life with him.
Now I shall seek repose on board my ship ;
For by to-morrow's dawn I mean to sail
To visit the Caucones, where a debt
Is due to me ; a debt not new nor small. 445
This youth who now has sought thee in thy home,
Dispatch him in thy chariot with thy son ;
And of thy horses those most swift of foot,
The best and strongest, for his journey give."

Thus having said, the goddess disappeared, 450
Taking an eagle's shape; amazement seized
All the beholders; and the aged chief
Was awe struck; as he saw this with his eyes.

Telemachus he took then by the hand,
And called him kindly by his name, and said: 455

"Dear youth, I have no fear that thou wilt prove
Feeble or base; since thee young as thou art
The gods attend, and follow with their care:

This was no other of the Olympian ones
Than she the child of Jove, most glorious, 460
Tritogeneia; who in favor held
Thy noble father above all the Greeks.

"Great Queen, be gracious; and fair honor grant
To me, my children, and my modest spouse:
To thee then will I offer gratefully 465
A yearling heifer; broad of front, untamed,
Which never yet has felt the yoke of man.
The horns of which entwined with gold shall be."

Thus prayed he, and Minerva heard his prayer.
Then straight Gerenian Nestor led the way, 470
His sons and sons-in-law all following him,

Towards his beauteous palace; when they reached
The stately mansion of the royal chief
On couches and on chairs they took their seats.
The aged lord himself then in the bowl 475
For all around him mixed the fragrant wine,
Which kept eleven years, the stewardess,
Releasing from its long confinement broached :
This wine the chief himself mixed in the bowl,
And poured libations praying fervently, 480
To Pallas, child of ægis-bearing Jove.

When all had poured libations, and had drunk
As much as they desired, they sought their homes.
The knight Gerenian Nestor orders gave
A couch of skilful carved-work to prepare 485
There under the re-echoing corridor
For the renowned Ulysses' cherished son ;
And close by him Pisistratus reposed,
Leader of men, so skilful with the lance ;
Who only of his sons then lacked a spouse. 490
He in an inner chamber took his rest,
Within his palace' lofty walls ; for him
The couch his queen and consort there prepared.

At morn, when rosy-fingered dawn appeared,
Gerenian Nestor from his couch arose : 495
And issuing from his house, he took his seat
On the white marble stones before his gates ;
Polished, they glistened in the light like oil :
On them had Neleus sat ; a counsellor
In wisdom rivalling the gods themselves : 500
But he subdued by death had gone below,
To Hades ; Nestor the Gerenian chief,
The bulwark of the Greeks, sat in his seat ;
And held the sceptre in his hands : his sons
Assembled round him as they issued forth : 505
Echephron, Stratius, and Perseus next,
Arétus, and heroic Thrasimede ;
Pisistratus, the warrior, came the sixth :
Telemachus they led forth like a god,
And placed him by their father's side ; to them 510
Gerenian Nestor then began to speak :
"Dear children, now at once fulfil my wish
Chief of all gods Minerva to adore,
Who at the sea-god's bounteous feast appeared :
Go seek at once the heifer in the field, 515

And let the herdsman drive her quickly hither ;
And let another seek the dark hulled ship
Of brave Telemachus ; and hither bring
His comrades, leaving only two on board ;
And hither also let the goldsmith come, 520
Laërkes, to adorn the horns with gold ;
The rest remain ; and tell them all within
The palace walls, the servants, to prepare
A stately feast ; and seats to place around ;
And wood to bring, and water bright and clear." 525
Thus said he, and all hastened to obey :
Came from the field the heifer ; from the ship
Telemachus' companions came ; the smith
Came, bringing tools to execute his work ;
Anvil and hammer, pincers deftly formed, 530
With which to work the gold : the goddess came,
And to the sacrifice herself drew near :
The venerable Nestor brought the gold,
Which then the smith wrought cunningly, and twined
Around the victim's horns ; that seeing this 535
A pleasing gift, the goddess should rejoice.
Echephron, and the noble Stratius,

Came, leading in the heifer by the horns,
Arétus from the chamber came, and brought
In one hand water in a sculptured vase, 540
And in the left a basket with the meal:
Brave Thrasymede stood near; a keen-edged axe
To slay the victim in his hands he held;
Perseus a basin had to catch the blood.
The aged chief began the sacrifice; 545
The holy water, and the barley meal
He offered first; and to the goddess prayed
With fervent words, as from the victim's front
He plucked the hairs, and cast them in the flame.
The prayers were offered, and the barley meal; 550
When Nestor's son, stout Thrasymede drew near,
And struck the victim; the sharp weapon shore
Through the neck sinews, motionless she fell:
The daughters of the chief, and his sons' wives,
With them Eurydice, his modest spouse, 555
(Of Clymenus the daughter eldest born,)
Together raised the sacrificial chant.
Then from the earth, trodden by many feet
The men raised up and held the victim's head,

And from her throat the chief Pisistratus, 560
Let out the dark blood, and the life at once.

The offering they divided speedily;
The haunches in due order severed were,
And these with fat were covered twice; thereon
The slices from the limbs were duly laid; 565
All these on blazing wood the aged chief
Consumed; and poured upon them sparkling wine:
With five-pronged forks in hand the youths stood near.

Soon as the haunches they had duly burnt,
And tasted the choice morsels; all the rest 570
Cut into portions small, and pierced with spits
They roasted; with the sharp spits in their hands.

Fair Polycasta, Nestor's youngest child,
Telemachus attended at the bath;
When he had bathed, she then with shining oil 575
Anointed him; and next about him cast
A mantle fair and tunic: like a god
He issued from the bath, and straightway sat
By Nestor's side, the shepherd of the folk.
When they the joints had roasted and prepared, 580
They served, and sitting down commenced the feast:

And chosen youths attended heedfully,
In golden beakers pouring out the wine.
When thirst and hunger both were satisfied,
The knight Gerenian Nestor spoke these words: 585
"My children, quickly for Telemachus
Now to the chariot yoke the long-maned steeds;
That they may bear him swiftly on his way."

Thus spake he, and they heard him, and obeyed,
And the swift horses to the chariot yoked; 590
In which the stewardess stored bread and wine,
And dainties such as noble princes eat.
Telemachus then mounted in the car,
The son of Nestor mounted by his side,
The chief Pisistratus; and took the reins. 595
He whipped the horses forward; o'er the plain
They flew with willing speed, and left behind
The lofty keep of Pylos speedily.
All day the harness rattled as they went:
Then set the sun, the streets in shadow lay, 600
As they arrived at Pheræ; where abode
Diocles, of Ortilochus the son,
Who from Alpheius sprang; they rested there;

And he received them kindly as his guests.

And when the rosy-fingered dawn appeared, 605
Born of the early morn; they yoked the steeds,
Mounted the painted chariot, and drove out
Through the fore-gateway, and the sounding porch:
He whipped them forward, and with willing speed,
They onward flew, and soon they reached the plain, 610
Where stood the growing corn, their journey's end;
So swift the horses bore them on the way:
Then set the sun, the streets in shadow lay.

BOOK IV.



ARGUMENT.

Telemachus at Lacedæmon—Narratives of Helen and Menelaus
—Ithaca—Projects of the Suitors.

DAYS 5, 6.

THEN Lacedæmon in its vale they reached
Guarded by hills, where Menelaus dwelt :
There, in his home they found the noble chief,
Holding among his friends a festival
To celebrate the marriage of his son 5
And daughter guileless ; her he now sent forth,
To be the consort of Achilles' son,
Achilles, who smote down the armed ranks ;
According to his plighted word in Troy,
Which now the gods allowed him to fulfil : 10
And to the far-famed city of the prince

Who ruled the Myrmidons, he her despatched
With chariots and with horses in her train.
And for his much loved son, stout Megapenth,
Born of a slave, the chief from Sparta brought 15
The daughter of Alector as a bride.
The gods to Helen offspring had refused,
Since she brought forth the sweet Hermione,
Beauteous in form as golden Aphrodite.
Thus Menelaus' friends and kinsmen all 20
Were holding revelry within his halls:
To them a minstrel sang melodiously,
And harp'd to his song; two acrobats
Whirled lithely in their midst, and moved in time,
Their dance commencing with the melody. 25
Telemachus, and Nestor's noble son,
Arrived before the palace gates, and stood
They and their horses there; whom straight descried
The chief attendant of King Menelaus,
The ready Eteoneus; through the halls 30
He hastened to the shepherd of the folk,
And standing near uttered these wing'd words:
"O Noble Menelaus, strangers twain

In beauty like the sons of Jupiter,
Have just arrived; their steeds shall we unyoke? 35
Pray tell me; or as we are feasting here
Shall they elsewhere seek hospitality?"

In anger Menelaus him addressed:
"Boëthus' son, thou hast not heretofore
Lacked sense; but now thou pratest like a child: 40
We in our wandering homeward have enjoyed
Often from strangers hospitality;
May Jove henceforward from our travail sore
Grant us repose! at once their steeds unyoke,
And bring the strangers here to feast with us." 45

He spoke; the other hastening from the hall
His fellow servants told to follow him:
They loosed the foaming horses from the yoke,
And to the manger safely tethered them;
And gave them spelt, with yellow barley mixed: 50
Next leant the chariot 'gainst the polished walls
And to the beauteous palace led the guests.

They gazed with marvel at the royal abode;
For as the lustre of the sun and moon
Shone forth the lofty mansion of the chief. 55

But when they had enjoyed the wondrous sight,
They were conducted to the polished baths
Attended by the maids, who afterwards
With shining olive oil anointed them,
And mantles soft, and tunics round them cast: 60
They then by Menelaus took their seats.
Meanwhile to wash their hands, a serving-maid
From a rich golden ewer water poured
Into a silver basin, and laid out
The polished board; the modest stewardess 65
Served bread and choice of viands from her store
Right willingly; dishes of various sorts
The carver placed, and golden cups at hand.
Then greeting them, brown Menelaus spoke:
 "Share ye my bread and welcome; afterwards 70
When ye have eaten ask we whence ye are:
Your parentage is not obscure I ween,
But ye are surely of heroic race,
And sprung from chieftains who the sceptre bear;
No base-born fathers could beget such sons." 75
He said, and with his hands before them placed
The choicest portions of the fatted ox,

The honored viands destined for himself :
They on the ready dainties laid their hands :
When thirst and hunger both were satisfied, 80
Telemachus thus spoke to Nestor's son ;
Keeping their heads together, in his ear,
So that the others should not hear his words :

“Look, my heart's brother, at the glittering sheen
Of gold, of silver, amber, ivory, 85
Resplendent on the mansion's spacious walls ;
No richer is the hall of Jove himself :
Amazement holds me chained to see such wealth.”

But Menelaus overheard his speech ;
And thus addressed him with these wing'd words : 90

“Beloved youths, no mortal can contend
With Jove ; immortal is his dwelling-place,
All he possesses is immortal too ;
Howe'er it be that any man in wealth
Can rival me or not : after much toil, 95
And wanderings manifold, I hither brought
In the eighth year these treasures in my ships ;
Cyprus, Phœnicia had I visited,
And Egypt too ; and reached the Æthiops,

Sidonians and Erempi; and the shores 100
Of Libya, where the rams mature so soon,
And thrice the ewes bring forth within the year:
Where neither prince nor peasant ever lacks
Cheese, flesh, and milk delicious; all of which
The teeming cattle plenteously afford. 105
Among these distant climes I wandered long,
Collecting treasure, till that hateful one
My brother slew; at unawares, by stealth,
Assisted by the craft of his vile wife:
Therefore my wealth gives little joy to me. 110
Ye from your fathers must have heard all this
Whoe'er ye be; for much have I endured;
My pleasant home was wrecked, and all it held
My treasures various and rich despoiled:
Would that I now had but a third of these 115
So that the heroes were alive who fell
In distant Troy, afar from fruitful Greece!
For all of whom I often grieve and mourn:
Sitting alone, within my halls, I oft
Indulge my grief, and then restrain my tears, 120
For quickly comes satiety of woe.

“ But though I grieve for all, for one I grieve
More deeply than the rest ; the thought of whom,
Destroys my sleep, and spoils my zest for food :
No Grecian chief so labored in my cause, 125
Nor suffered trials as Ulysses did :
Sorrow is doomed by fate for him ; for me,
Regret that nothing ever can console ;
On his account, who long has disappeared,
Whether alive or dead no one can tell. 130
The old Laertes and Penelope,
That prudent matron ; and Telemachus,
Whom newly born, a babe, he left at home,
No doubt are grieving sadly now for him.”

He spoke, and anguish for his father's fate 135
O'ercame the youth ; tears from his eyelids fell ;
With both his hands he held his purple robe
Before his eyes : this Menelaus saw,
And doubted in his mind what he should do ;
Whether to wait and let him mention first 140
His father's name, or question him at once :
While thus debating in his doubtful thoughts,
Forth from her scented chamber Helen came ;

As lovely as the goddess Artemis,
Who bears the golden distaff, she appeared : 145
Adrasta placed for her the sculptured chair,
Alcippe brought a mat of downy wool,
Phylo the silver basket bore, a gift
Alcandra, wife of Polybus of Thebes,
To Helen gave in Egypt; where is stored 150
In every mansion the most lavish wealth :
He, Polybus, to Menelaus gave
Two baths of silver wrought, and tripods twain,
And golden talents ten; besides the gifts
So rare, to Helen offered by his wife; 155
A golden distaff, and a work basket
That ran on wheels, of silver; round its edge
A marge of gold was deftly inter-wrought :
This by her side the maiden Phylo placed,
Filled high with twisted threads; and on the top 160
The distaff lay, holding the purple wool.
Then straightway on the couch she took her seat,
Her feet upon the foot-stool placed, and spoke
Greeting her husband with enquiring words :
“ O noble Menelaus, do we know 165

Who these our visitors may claim to be?
Say, do I err; or do I rightly guess?
My inclination urges me to speak,
For never man or woman have I seen,
(And as I gaze amazement holds me chained!) 170
So like another as this youthful chief
Is like Ulysses' son Telemachus;
Whom newly born, a baby, in his home
Ulysses left; when all ye Greeks embarked
And sailed for Troy, and bravely undertook 175
That direful war for me, the shameless one!"

To her brown Menelaus thus replied:
"Lady, I think that thou hast rightly guessed;
His are the hands and feet, and rapid glance
Shot from the eyes, and his the countenance; 180
The locks which o'er it wave are also his:
Just now too, when I spoke about Ulysses,
And called to mind his sufferings in my cause,
He from his brow let fall the bitter tear,
Holding his purple robe before his eyes." 185

Then Nestor's son thus answered in reply:
"O Menelaus, leader of the folk,

This is his son indeed as thou hast said :
But he is modest, and is loth to seem
Of hasty speech, on first approaching thee ; 190
Whose words delight us as they were a god's :
The knight Gerenian Nestor, me hath sent
To be his escort ; since he longed to see thee,
Hoping for thy support by word or deed :
For many cares beset a youthful son 195
Left by his father in his home alone,
With no one near to succour or advise :
And thus now fares it with Telemachus ;
His father absent, and none other left
Among his people, him to shield from ill." 200

The brown-haired Menelaus thus replied :
"In truth the son of one most dear to me
Now visits my abode ; who in my cause
Has many a toil and hardship undergone ;
One whom I would have held my dearest friend 205
Of all the Greeks, if but Olympian Jove
All-seeing, had vouchsafed a safe return
In our swift ships across the salt sea flood.
In Argos then I would have offered him

A city and a palace for his home ; 210

Bringing him hither from his Ithaca,

His goods, his household, and his people all ;

From one of my own cities having moved

The present dwellers who inhabit it,

And who to me alone allegiance give : 215

Then could we have enjoyed close intercourse ;

And us delighting in our friendship then

Nought could have severed ; until death at last

Had with his sable cloud o'ershadowed us.

A god himself has thwarted this, and doomed 220

That he alone should helpless, homeless, be."

He spoke ; his words awoke the grief of all ;

And Argive Helen wept, the child of Jove ;

Telemachus, and Menelaus wept ;

And Nestor's son could not refrain from tears ; 225

For then Antilochus he called to mind,

Slain by the glorious son of the bright East ;

Remembering him, he spake these winged words :

" O Atreus' son, the aged Nestor said

When we conversed together in our halls, 230

And in our mutual converse spoke of thee,

That thou for wisdom wast pre-eminent ;
If this be so, I pray thee hear my words :
I for my part would not give way to grief
After a feast ; to-morrow's dawn must shine : 235
Not that I scorn myself to grieve or weep
For one on whom the last sad doom has fallen ;
Since to us mortals, in our misery
Our only solace is to show our grief
By locks close shorn, and cheeks bedewed with tears :
For I alas ! a brother have to mourn ;
Nor he the least heroic of the Greeks :
Thou must have known him well ; although by me
He died unknown, unseen ; but I have heard
Antilochus was peerless among all, 245
As swift of foot as he was brave in fight."

To him then Menelaus thus replied :
"Dear youth, thy words and acts might well become
A man of wisdom, and of riper years ;
Thou speakest wisely, as thy father would : 250
How marked the race of him, whom Saturn's son
Has blessed in wedlock, and in offspring too !
As thus to Nestor he has deigned to grant

Old age, and honors in his happy home ;
And sons as famed for wisdom as in war. 255
The grief which touched us, we will now cast off ;
And pouring water on our hands resume
Once more the banquet ; by to-morrow's dawn
Telemachus and I will converse hold."

He spoke, and his attendant diligent, 260
Asphalion, poured water on their hands,
Which they upon the ready viands laid.
This did moreover Helen, child of Jove
She in the wine which they were drinking cast
A drug, which strife and sorrow lulls to sleep 265
And brings forgetfulness of every ill :
Whoe'er may quaff this mingled in his cup,
No tear will he let fall within that day ;
Not if his father or his mother die ;
Or if a brother, or beloved son, 270
Be smitten down before his very eyes :
Such was the wondrous drug, of virtue rare,
Which to Jove's daughter Polydamna gave,
The wife of Thon, in Egypt ; where the soil
Prolific, drugs and herbs in plenty bears ; 275

Some of rare virtue, some of deadly bane :
Here they who know the healing art excel,
For from Pæon's race they all are sprung.
She mixed this wondrous potion in the bowl,
And bade them fill the cups; and thus she spoke: 280
"O noble Menelaus, Atreus' son,
And ye the children of heroic chiefs;
Jove good and ill distributes; now to one,
Now to another; he almighty is.
Now sit ye at your banquet, and indulge 285
In converse, in which I will bear my part:
I cannot all the famous acts recount
Done by Ulysses of the steadfast soul;
This one will show how much the valiant chief
Ventured and suffered in the Trojans' land, 290
Where ye the Greeks so many ills endured.
He on himself inflicting shameful wounds,
And clad in tattered garments like a slave,
Entered the spacious city of the foe:
And he who had no equal 'mongst the Greeks 295
Appeared in likeness of a beggar vile;
Thus to the city came he in disguise:

The Trojans knew him not ; and I alone
Failed not to recognise and question him ;
And he with cunning shunned my questioning : 300
But when I him attended at the bath,
With oil anointed him, and round him cast
His garments ; then I swore a binding oath
Not to disclose his presence to the Trojans
Till he should safely reach on his return, 305
The camp, and tents, and swift ships of the Greeks.
Then he revealed to me their mind and plans ;
And after he had many Trojans slain
With his sharp sword, back to the Greeks he went,
With information gathered from the foe. 310
The Trojan women uttered wailings shrill ;
But I rejoiced within my heart ; which yearned
With longing homeward ; and I deeply grieved
For all the sin which Aphrodité caused ;
When far astray she led me by her wiles 315
From my loved native land, and from my child :
Torn from my marriage-bed, and husband too,
As noble in his mind as in his form."

Then in reply brown Menelaus spoke :

“O Lady all thou say’st is just and true ; 320
In my long wanderings over foreign lands
Of many chiefs heroic I have known
The mind and disposition ; but my eyes,
Have never seen another with a heart
So true and steadfast as Ulysses had. 325
What courage and endurance did he show
The valiant chief, when we the chosen few
Of all the Greeks, sat in the wooden horse
Ready to hurl slaughter and death on Troy :
Thou didst approach ; sure some divinity 330
Who willed the Trojans to obtain renown
Must have constrained thy will ; and on thy steps
Deiphobus, the god-like, followed close :
Thrice round the hollow ambush didst thou walk,
Touching it with thy hands ; and thou didst call 335
The Grecian chiefs by name ; and with thy voice
Didst counterfeit the voices of their wives ;
And I, the son of Tydeus and Ulysses,
Seated within, all heard thee as thou calledst ;
We two distracted, and with rash resolve, 340
Were ready to rush forth, or answer thee ;

Ulysses held us back, and checked our rashness :
Then all the Grecian chiefs in silence sat,
Save one, Anticlus, would have answered thee,
Had not Ulysses seized him by the jaw 345
And held him firmly with his nervous hands ;
And saved us Greeks : nor did he let him go
Until Minerva led thee far from us."

Telemachus, the prudent youth replied :
"O noble Menelaus, chief of men ; 350
How much the sadder this ! his bitter fate
Nought could have turned aside ; not if his heart
Within his breast had been an iron heart !
Now shall we seek our couches, and repose,
That we may be refreshed with gentle sleep ?" 355

He spoke, and Argive Helen ordered then
The serving maidens straightway to prepare
Their couches, underneath the corridor,
With goodly purple cushions piled thereon,
With carpets decked, and blankets of soft wool. 360
They hastened from the hall at her command
With torches in their hands, and her obeyed.
Meanwhile the herald ushered out the guests,

Telemachus, and Nestor's noble son,
Who in the corridor lay down to rest. 365

And Menelaus in an inner room
Within his stately palace walls reposed,
And Helen, lovely lady, by his side;
She of the flowing robes which swept the ground.

And when the rosy-fingered Dawn appeared 370
Born of the early morning, from his couch

Sprang Menelaus, of the battle cry
So cheering in the fight; his robes he donned,
And o'er his shoulders cast his sword; and bound
His graceful sandals on his well-shaped feet; 375

And issued from his chamber like a god:
He made Telemachus sit by his side,
And called him kindly by his name, and said:

"Telemachus, thou gallant youth, what need
Has brought thee hither o'er the distant sea? 380

Pray tell me truly what the cause may be;
Of public or of private interest?"

Telemachus, the prudent youth replied:

"O son of Atreus, leader of the folk,
I come to ask if thou canst tell me aught 385

Touching my father; for my home is spoiled,
And all my rich possessions are destroyed:
My house is filled with men on evil bent,
My mother's suitors; with rude insolence
They eat my sheep and crumple-hornéd kine: 390
Therefore I pray thee as a suppliant,
Be pleased to tell me if thou know'st his fate;
If thou with thine own eyes hast seen; or heard
From any traveller aught concerning him:
In truth his mother brought him forth for woe! 395
Let not thy pity spare or soften aught
But tell me truly all that thou hast seen:
I pray thee, if my father, brave Ulysses,
Have even stood by thee in word or deed,
And done good service in the Trojan's land 400
Where ye, the Greeks, so many ills endured;
Call this to mind; and tell me now the truth."

In bitter anger Menelaus spoke:

"Ye gods! that men contemptible should dare
To dream that they might occupy the couch 405
Of him the dauntless chief! as if the hind
Should lay her suckling young ones in the haunt

Of the dread lion; she with anxious gaze
Scans as she feeds, the slopes and grassy vales:
But he returns, and finds them in his lair; 410
Dire is the vengeance he inflicts on them,
Dire will Ulysses' vengeance be on these.
If father Jove, Apollo, and Minerva,
Would but vouchsafe Ulysses to appear;
Such as he was when once in well-built Lesbos 415
He forward strode to wrestle in a match
With Philomeleus' son, and hurled him down:
A dreadful fall; at which the Greeks rejoiced;
Could he but thus your mother's suitors meet,
For all this rabble then how swift the fate, 420
Bitter for them the wedding feast would be!

“As to the questions which thou askest me

• So urgently; I will not thee deceive,
Nor from the truth will swerve in aught I say:
All that the aged genius of the sea 425
Whose words are true related, I will tell;
Nor will I aught conceal or screen from thee.

“The gods in Egypt kept me still detained,
Longing for home; because of my neglect

In offering them accustomed sacrifice; 430
For they are ever jealous of their laws.
There lies an island on the weltering main
Just off the coast of Egypt—Pharos called,
Not farther than a gallant bark could run
During the day, before a favoring gale; 435
It has a land-locked haven, whence the ships
When they have watered can put out to sea.
For twenty days the gods detained me there;
No seaward breezes gave their breath, our fleet
To herald o'er the bosom of the deep; 440
Our food had been consumed, and with our food
The spirit of my comrades, had not one
And she one of the immortals, pitied me,
And rescued us; Eidothée, the child
Of mighty Proteus, genius of the sea. 445
Her soul was stirred to pity when she met me
Far from my comrades wand'ring and alone:
For they about the island listless strolled,
And strove to angle fish with curv'd hooks,
To serve for food; hunger their entrails gnawed. 450
She drawing near addressed me with these words:

“O foolish stranger, hast thou lost thy wits?
Or dost thou stay here of thine own accord,
And findest pleasure in enduring woe?
Why dost thou tarry in this isle so long, 455
No effort made to seek thy journey's end?
Thou wilt wear out the patience of thy crew!”

“She spake; and thus I answered in reply:

“Goddess, whate'er thy name, I thee assure
That not of my own will do I delay; 460
Perchance I have unwittingly offended
The gods who dwell in heaven; tell me now,
For gods know all things; what immortal one
Now holds me back, and bars me from my path,
And how I may my homeward course pursue 465
Across the deep, wherein the sea fish play?”

“I spoke, the lovely goddess thus replied:

“O stranger, I will truly answer thee;
A venerable genius of the sea,
Immortal, and of speech infallible 470
Egyptian Proteus called, frequents this isle;
He Neptune's minister and henchman true
Of every sea the deep abysses knows;

They say that I my being owe to him,
And he my father is; if thou by stealth 475
Canst get him in thy power, he will declare
The course and measure of thy homeward voyage
Across the deep, wherein the sea fish play.
And he, O chief, will tell if thou desire
The good and evil that has taken place 480
Within thy palace, which thou long hast left,
On this thy journey long and dangerous.'

"The goddess spoke, and thus I answered her:

"'But wilt thou now explain by what device
I may entrap the genius of the sea; 485
Lest he foreseeing may escape my toils;
A god will hardly be by man subdued.'

"I spoke, the lovely goddess straight replied:

"'O stranger, I will tell thee what to do;
Soon as the sun has climbed the half of heaven, 490
The aged god, of words infallible,
With the west wind emerges from the sea,
By the dark ripple of the waves concealed,
And lays him down under the hollow caves:
And seals in numbers issuing from the flood, 495

The progeny of Halosydne fair,
Repose around him; and their breath exhales
The pungent odour of the deep salt sea:
And I will thee conduct at dawn of day,
And lay thee in their ranks; and thou must choose 500
Three trusty comrades from thy gallant ships
Most fitted to assist thy enterprise:
Now I will caution thee before, and tell
The weird devices of the agēd god.
First he will count and number all his seals; 505
When he has told them on his fingers five,
He in their midst will lay him down to rest,
As would a shepherd in his flock of sheep;
And when thou seest him in slumber bound,
Seize him, and hold him fast with all thy strength, 510
However hard he struggle to escape:
All shapes he will assume, which are produced
On earth, in water, or the dreadful flame;
But ye must all the faster cling to him:
But soon as he himself shall speak to thee 515
In the same shape thou sawest him asleep,
Use no more force, but let the sea-god free.

Then he, O gallant hero, will declare
Which of the deities is wroth with thee
And how thou mayest thy homeward course pursue 520
Across the deep wherein the sea fish play.'

"She spoke and dived beneath the seething waves:
I to the ships returned, and where they lay
Hauled up upon the sands; and as I went
My mind was stirred with many anxious thoughts: 525
And when I reached the ships, we then prepared
Our evening meal, and fell ambrosial night;
And lying on the beach we took our rest.

"And when the rosy-fingered dawn appeared
Along the shore of the far-stretching sea 530
I went, and to the gods prayed fervently:
And of my crews I three companions chose,
Most trusty for a daring enterprise.

"The goddess from the bosom of the deep
Emerged just then; and in her hands she bore 535
Four seal skins, from the creatures newly stripped,
Intending thus her father to deceive:
And in the sandy beach of the salt sea
She dug a lair for us, and waiting sat:

When we drew near, she made us all lie down, 540
And over each of us a seal's skin threw;
It was a fearful ambush, for the stench
Of these sea-nurtured seals distressed us sore;
For who would lie beside a slimy fish?
But for our sufferings she contrived relief; 545
She brought ambrosia; and for each of us
A portion underneath our nostrils placed;
And that sweet scent destroyed the fishy smell.
There we remained with patience all the morn;
And waited, while the seals from out the sea 550
Issued in herds, and lay along the beach.
At noon the aged sea-god came on shore,
And found his well-fed seals; among the rows
He walked surveying all, and counted them;
And reckoned us the first among his fish, 555
With no suspicion of a stratagem;
And then himself lay down to take his rest.
We with a shout rushed in, and seized him there;
Nor did the aged god forget his craft;
First like a long-maned lion he appeared; 560
A dragon next, a leopard, and a boar;

Then flowing water, and a towering tree ;
But we unflinchingly held on to him :
But when the aged god, so skilled in wiles
Was wearied ; he addressed me with these words ; 565

“ ‘ Who, son of Atreus, has revealed to thee
The secrets of the gods ? against my will
Thou hast entrapped me ; say, what is thy need ? ’

“ Thus said he, and I answered in reply :

“ ‘ O venerable god, thou knowest well ; 570
Wherefore address me with deceiving words ?
How long I am delayed within this isle !
No outlet can I find ; within my breast
My soul is wearied ; tell me now, I pray,
For gods know all things,—which immortal one 575
Now holds me back, and bars me from my course,
And how I may my homeward course pursue,
Across the flood, wherein the sea-fish play ? ’

“ I spoke, and straight he answered in reply :
‘ Thou shouldst have offered solemn sacrifice 580
To Jupiter, and all the other gods,
Before thou didst embark ; and swiftly then
Thou hadst sailed home across the dark grey sea.

Fate will not thee allow to see once more
Thy much loved friends, nor reach thy well-built home
In thy own native land, till thou return
To Egypt's river, which from Heaven flows ;
And offer consecrated hecatombs
To the immortal gods who dwell in heaven ;
Then they will guide whither thou long'st to go.' 590

“Thus spoke the god ; my heart within me sank,
Because again across the stormy deep
He bade me go ; a long and dreary voyage,
To Egypt ; then I spoke to him again :

“O venerable god, all thy commands 595
I will obey, but tell me truly now
If all the Greeks have safely reached their homes,
Whom Nestor left, and I, on board their ships,
When we were sailing on our way from Troy ?
Has any since the war was ended, died, 600
On board his ship, when on his homeward voyage ?
Or met his fate at home, among his friends ?’

“I spoke, and thus he straightway answered me :
‘O son of Atreus, wherefore dost thou ask ?
It is not well for thee to know all this ; 605

Or that thou share the knowledge I possess :
I warn thee, that thou wilt not tearless be
When thou hast heard the tale I have to tell.

“ ‘ Many have fallen, many too are spared :
Only two chiefs of all the mailèd Greeks 610
Have perished on their home return ; in war
I need not say who fell, as thou wast there :
And one yet lives, hemmed in by the broad sea.

“ ‘ Ajax is lost, with all his long-oared ships ;
Him Neptune cast upon the mighty rocks 615
Of Gyræ ; and preserved him from the sea :
In spite of Pallas’ wrath he had escaped,
Had he not uttered a blaspheming speech ;
He said he would escape the sea’s abyss
Maugre the gods ; Neptune heard his boast, 620
And with the trident in his mighty hands
Smote the Gyræan rock, and clove it down ;
The base remained ; the crest fell in the sea,
The seat of Ajax, when he thus blasphemed ;
And dragged him down to the vast seething deep ; 625
And thus he perished in the briny waves.
Thy brother with his ships escaped disaster,

Preserved by Juno, Queen of Goddesses ;
But when he neared Maleia's craggy steep
A driving tempest whirled him back to sea, 630
Lamenting his sad fate ; towards the cape
Which forms the furthest limit of the land.
There stood the palace where Thyestes dwelt,
And there his son Ægisthus then abode.

“ ‘ But now a chance of safe return appeared, 635
And to a favoring breeze the gods had turned
The adverse winds ; and soon they reached their home ;
How gladly then he sprang upon the shore !
And as he shed warm tears, he kissed the soil,
His native soil, he so rejoiced to see. 640
But him the watchman from his eyrie saw,
Whom traitorous Ægisthus stationed there ;
To him he promised golden talents twain,
For his reward ; for a whole year he watched,
Lest unobserved the chief should reach his home, 645
And take a dread revenge ; he hastened then
To tell Ægisthus of his near approach,
Who straight contrived a crafty villany.
He placed an ambush ; choosing twenty men

To lie in wait, the bravest in the land : 650

And at the same time ordered to prepare

A banquet, and in haste he went himself

With chariots, and with horses in his train

Inviting Agamemnon to the feast ;

But in his heart contriving treachery. 655

Him to his palace he conducted then

Unwitting of his doom ; and murdered him,

When he had entertained and feasted him,

As one might slaughter in his stall the ox :

And of the chieftain's comrades none were spared, 660

And of Ægisthus' followers none escaped ;

But all were slain in that fell banquet hall.'

"He spoke; and straight my heart within me sank

And sitting on the sand I wept; nor wished

Longer to live, or the sun's light to see ; 665

But as I took my fill of weeping there,

The genius of the sea thus spoke again :

'Weep not, O Atreus' son, incessantly,

Thy ceaseless tears will benefit thee nought ;

But quickly try to reach thy native land, 670

That thou may'st find the traitor yet alive ;

Orestes will forestall thy vengeance yet,
And thou wilt only see his obsequies.'

As thus he spoke my courage was restored,
And nerved my heart within my aching breast: 675
I then addressed him with these winged words:

" 'I know the fate of these, but wilt thou name
The one who if alive is kept from home,
Hemmed in by the broad sea? or is he dead?
Spite of my grief I fain would hear of him!' 680

"I spoke and thus he answered in reply:

" 'Laertes' son who dwells in Ithaca:
I saw him in an isle, shedding hot tears,
In fair Calypso's palace, who by force
Detains him there; he cannot reach his home, 685
No comrades has he, and no ships with oars
To bear him o'er the bosom of the deep.

" 'For thee, O noble Menelaus, destiny
Ordains, thou shalt not die and end thy days
In Argos rich in pastures; but the gods 690
Will waft thee to the far Elysian fields
The utmost confines of the earth; where dwells
Brown Rhadamanthus; where for mortal men

A life of perfect happiness is found :

No snow, no winter, and no rain are there ; 695

But Ocean sends the breezes from the West

With gentle breath its dwellers to refresh :

And this because fair Helen is thy wife,

And thou thyself the son-in-law of Jove.'

"He spoke, and dived beneath the billowy deep : 700

I to my ship, and comrades brave returned,

While many anxious thoughts my mind disturbed.

And when I reached the ships close by the sea,

We straightway then prepared our evening meal

And night ambrosial fell ; upon the shore, 705

By the sea side, we laid us down to sleep.

But when the rosy-fingered Dawn appeared,

Born of the early morning, first of all

We launched our ships upon the sea divine ;

And next we placed on board the buoyant ships 710

The masts and sails, and went on board ourselves ;

The ready oarsmen sat upon the thwarts,

And struck the yeasty water with their oars.

To Egypt's river, which from heaven flows

I quickly brought my ships again ; and there 715

I offered sacrifice of hecatombs.

When the immortals' wrath I had appeased,

To Agamemnon next I raised a tomb,

So that his glory should eternal be.

When all these things were done, we sailed away : 720

The gods vouchsafed to me a favoring breeze

Which swiftly bore me to my native land.

But now I hope thou wilt remain with me

Until eleven or twelve days be past,

Then from my palace I will send thee home 725

With honor, and with honorable gifts:

Three horses, and a splendid chariot,

And a rich goblet I will give to thee,

With which to make libations to the gods;

That there thou ever may'st remember me." 730

Telemachus, the prudent youth, replied :

"O Atreus' son, keep me no longer here;

For a whole year I fain would stay with thee,

And feel no craving for my home or kin,

As I sat listening to thy discourse, 735

So wondrous my delight to hear thy words:

But my companions chafe at my delay,

At sacred Pylos; while thou keep'st me here;
And wilt thou let thy gift a jewel be?
Horses I cannot take to Ithaca, 740
But let them here remain for thy delight:
For thy dominion is a rolling plain,
Where grow rich clover, and luxuriant grass,
And wheat, and spelt, and breadths of yellow grain:
In Ithaca we have no stretching downs, 745
Nor meadows; but a grazing scant for goats;
Though far more lovely than a pasture land:
Our island homes are not for horses fit,
Nor have we goodly meadows on the slopes
Which slant sheer towards the sea: but ne'ertheless
Dearest of lands is Ithaca to me!" 751

Thus spake the youth, and Menelaus smiled,
And soothed him with his hand in kindly wise;
And called him kindly by his name and said:
"Thy words betray thy noble blood, dear youth; 755
I willingly will change my gifts to thee,
As easily I can; and in my house
The richest and the rarest gifts I have
Among my treasures lying, shall be thine:

A goblet of consummate workmanship ; 760
Of silver pure, with gold worked round the brim,
A masterpiece of Vulcan ; Phædimus,
The warrior king of the Sidonians,
Gave it me, when within his palace walls
I sojourned on my homeward journey here : 765
This as a gift I will on thee bestow."

While these in friendly converse were engaged
The revellers sought the palace of the king
And sheep they brought, and wine which cheers the
heart ;
The veiled serving-women brought them bread, 770
And all were busied to prepare the feast.
The haughty suitors in their wonted place
Before Ulysses' palace were employed
In hurling quoits, and hunting spears, in sport,
Upon the courtyard, levelled skilfully. 775
Antinoüs was seated ; and by him
Eurymachus of god-like beauty sat ;
In valour these the others all surpassed.
To these Noëmon son of Phronios

Drew near, and thus Antinoüs addressed : 780

“ Antinoüs, are we informed or not

What time we may expect Telemachus

From sandy Pylos? whither he has gone

On board one of my ships, of which just now

I have an urgent need : I fain would go 785

To Elis, where there are twelve mares of mine,

With them their foals, laborious mules, unbroke ;

And one of these I would bring here to break.”

He spoke ; they were surprised, for no one thought

That to Neleian Pylos he had gone ; 790

But rather to the country pastures near,

Where he the flocks or swineherd visited :

Antinoüs addressed him with these words :

“ Tell me in truth what time he went away ?

Did any noble youths of Ithaca, 795

Or only slaves and servants follow him ?

How had he means to carry out his plans !

And tell me truly, for I fain would know,

If he by force conveyed away thy ship,

Against thy will? or did he thee persuade 800

To lend her to him by his urgent prayer?”

Noëmon son of Phronios replied :

“I lent her to him of my own accord;
Who could act otherwise, at the appeal
Of such a chief? ’Twere hard him to refuse. 805
The noblest youths among us follow him;
And at the head I saw myself embark
Or Mentor, or a god who took his form :
For I to my surprise at early dawn
Of yesterday the god-like Mentor saw ; 810
Although methought to Pylos he had gone.”

He spoke and to his father’s house returned;
And both the chiefs were startled at his speech;
The suitors left their sports, and gathered round :
Antinoüs in anger them addressed ; 815
With fury his dark plotting heart was filled,
And both his eyes shone out like gleaming flame :

“Ye gods ! with a high hand Telemachus
Has carried out his journey, and his plans ;
Which we imagined he would never do : 820
The youth has gone his way in spite of us,
Equipped a ship, and manned her with a crew
The noblest and the bravest in the land ;

And further ill will follow; oh! that Jove
May slay him ere he grow to be a man! 825
But give me now a bark with twenty rowers,
That I may lie in ambush in his path:
I in the narrow strait will keep my watch
'Twixt Ithaca, and Samé steep with crags:
E'en yet this precious voyage he undertakes 830
All for his father's sake, may bring him woe."

He spoke, and all applauded and approved,
And rising to Ulysses' palace went.

Penelope was not long uninformed
Of all the schemes the suitors deeply laid; 835
Medon the herald told her; who outside
Had overheard their converse in the hall,
Where they contrived their plot: he straightway went
Towards the palace to Penelope:
Him meeting on the threshold she addressed: 840

"Why have the noble suitors sent thee here?
Tell me O herald, is it to command
The maidens of my noble lord to cease
Their housewife's work, and labor for their feast?
Oh! that they ne'er might urge their suits again! 845

And that they now might take their last carouse!
Thou bandest with these men to dissipate
The rich inheritance of my brave son :
When ye were children did ye never hear
Your fathers tell, the manner of the life 850
Ulysses led with them in days gone by ?
How in his public rule, in deed or word
He never overbearing was to them,
As sovran chiefs are often wont to be ;
Oppressing this one, and caressing that ? 855
No wrong wrought he to any in the land ;
But your injurious deeds and thoughts are plain,
And manifest ; no gratitude exists
Amongst you now for all his kindly acts.”
Medon the wise in answer her addressed : 860
“ I would, O Queen, this were our greatest ill !
But a much graver and more shameful crime
The suitors contemplate ; which Jove avert !
With the sharp sword they now design to slay
Telemachus, as he is voyaging home : 865
To sacred Pylos he has lately gone,
And Lacedæmon the divine ; to seek

If news there be touching his father's fate."

As thus he spoke, her heart within her sank,
Her knees were nerveless, speechless long she stood ;
Her eyes were filled with tears, and her rich voice 871
Was choked ; at length she thus found words to say :

"Why has he gone, O herald? sure no need
For him to sail away in those swift ships,
Which are the chariots of the salt sea flood 875
For warriors; them to bear across the main :
Or does he wish no name to leave behind?"

Medon the wise, in answer thus replied :

"I know not if a god have urged him on,
Or his own will have instigated him 880
To go to Pylos, that he might enquire
About his father's fate or home return."

He spoke, and left her, passing through the hall.
She was o'erwhelmed with sore, heart-breaking grief,
And sat not on the couches ranged around 885
The gorgeous chamber; but upon the floor
She crouching sat in miserable woe :
The women young and old around her wailed ;
Penelope, lamenting, them addressed :

“Hear me my trusty maids, the Olympian god 890
Has given me afflictions far beyond
All other women of my age and kin :
A husband I have lost both good and brave,
With every noble quality adorned,
Whose fame through Greece and Argos is extolled :
Besides all this, my son, so fondly loved, 896
The storms have swept away, unknown to fame :
And I unwitting he had left his home !
Cruel, it never entered in the mind
Of one of you to wake me from my sleep ; 900
Though at the very time ye must have known
That he was starting in the black hulled ship.
For had I his intended journey known
He doubtless would have stayed at my request,
However eager on his way to go ; 905
Or he had left me dead within these halls.

“But summon Dolios at once to me,
The aged servant, whom my father gave
To be my follower when I left my home ;
And who my garden tends, so thick with shrubs ; 910
That he may quickly tell Laertes this ;

And he will come to us and counsel take,
To raise some pity in the people's hearts;
Who now it seems are seeking to destroy
His, and Ulysses' offspring, root and branch." 915

The faithful Euryclea her addressed :

"If with the ruthless sword thou slay me here
Dear child, I will not hide from thee the truth :
I knew all these his plans ; and gave to him
The food and wine he ordered me to give : 920
He also forced from me a mighty oath
That I would not reveal the scheme to thee
Till the twelfth day were past ; or thou shouldst miss him,
And information of his absence gain ;
Lest tears should mar thy lovely countenance. 925
Do thou now take a bath, and clothe thy limbs
With garments fair ; and to thy upper room
Ascending, followed by thy serving-maids,
Pray to the child of ægis-bearing Jove ;
For him can Pallas surely save from death. 930
Vex not the aged chief with thy sad tale :

I cannot think that the Arceisian race
Is hateful to the gods ; but there will be

For ever a successor, to possess
The lofty palace, and the rich domain." 935

Thus spake she; and the lady's sobs were lulled
And dried her tears; she straightway took her bath,
And garments fair about her limbs she cast,
And to her upper chamber with her maids
Ascending, in a basket she laid out 940
The sacred meal, and to Minerva prayed:

"Unconquered child of ægis-bearing Jove,
Hear me; if e'er Ulysses in these halls
Have in thy honour fatted haunches burnt
Of sheep or oxen; then extend to me 945
Thy favor, and preserve my darling son;
And curb the suitors' haughty violence."

Thus having said, the sacrificial hymn
She chanted, and the goddess heard her prayer.
The suitors gathered in the shadowy halls, 950
One of these scornful youths addressed the rest:

"Tis plain the Queen whom we so long have wooed
Invokes the gods as ready now to wed,
Nor knows that we prepare to slay her son."

Thus said the youth, but little did he know, 955

Nor did the others, what had taken place :

Antinoüs then addressed them with these words :

“O comrades, we must carefully avoid

All threatening words, suspicion to awake ;

But let us now in silence set about 960

The plan proposed, on which we all agreed. ”

He said, and twenty gallant men he chose,

And took them to a ship upon the beach :

And first of all they launched her in the deep,

And then the mast and sails they placed on board ;

The oars they fitted in their leathern thongs, 966

The white sails loosed, and all their gear prepared ;

Meanwhile the ready servants brought their arms :

Next in deep water from the lofty beach

They moored the ship, and went on board themselves ;

And took their meal, and waited for the dark. 971

Then in her upper room, Penelope,

Fasting lay down ; nor food nor drink she took ;

In anxious doubt whether her noble son

Should 'scape destruction ; or if he should fall 975

Before the haughty suitors' dark designs :

And as the lion, when the hunter's toils

Encircle him, is anxious in unrest;
So was she anxious until slumber came
And lulled her to repose with limbs relaxed. 980

Then blue-eyed Pallas other plans contrived;
She raised a form which took Iphthimé's shape,
The daughter of Icarius, with whom
Eumelus wedded, who at Pheræ dwelt:
She to Ulysses' palace sent this form 985
To soothe the weeping and the wailing Queen,
And calm her sobbing, and her tearful sighs.
Into her sleeping chamber by the latch
The shadow came; and standing at her head
Addressed the lady with these words, and said: 990

“Penelope, thou sleepest in thy grief
But thee the gods who live in endless bliss
Will not abandon to thy care and woe;
Be sure thy son will soon come back to thee,
For never has he sinned against the gods.” 995

Penelope thus answered in reply,
In gentle slumber, at the gate of dreams:

“Why sister art thou here? thou art not wont
To visit me, thy dwelling is afar;

Why dost thou tell me to restrain my grief, 1000
And choking sobs, which rend my heart and breast?
First I have lost a husband good and brave,
Adorned with every noble quality,
Whose fame through Greece and Argos echoes wide :
And now my darling son has sailed away, 1005
A youth unskilled in council and in war :
For him I tremble ; and I sorely dread
What he may suffer in a foreign land,
Whither he now has gone, and on the deep ;
For many evil men contrive their plots, 1010
And even now are starting on their way
To slay him ere he reach his native shore."

The shadowy form in answer thus replied :
"Have courage ; nor resign thy soul to fear ;
For she is guiding him whom heroes pray 1015
To be their guard ; almighty is her power,
Pallas Minerva ; and she pities thee,
And now has sent me all this to relate."

Then her the chaste Penelope addressed :
"Oh ! if thou art divine, if thou hast heard 1020
A god's commands, I pray thee tell me now

The fate of him who is so miserable ;
Say, does he live and see the light of day ?
Or is he dead and down to Hades gone ? ”

The shadowy form in answer thus replied : 1025

“ Be he alive or dead, I cannot tell ;
It is not good to babble idle words.”

She spoke and vanished by the chamber latch,
On the wind’s breath ; straightway Icarus’ child
Awoke from slumber ; and her heart was stilled, 1030
For the true dream came just before the dawn.

Meanwhile the suitors had embarked and sailed
Across the track of waters, breathing out
Sudden destruction for Telemachus.

A rocky islet rises from the deep 1035
Twixt Ithaca and Samé rough with crags,
Called Asteris ; its haven safe for ships
Has double entrance to the sea ; and there
The princes lay in ambush for their prey.

BOOK V.



ARGUMENT.

Council of the Gods — Hermes sent to Calypso — Isle of Ogygia—Ulysses builds a raft—His voyage, and wreck on the coast of Scheria.

DAYS 7-33.

Now from Tithonus' bed the dawn arose

O'er mortals and immortals light to shed :

The gods in council sat, and in their midst

The lofty thunderer of might supreme.

Pallas to them with constant memory 5

Ulysses' woes recounted ; for she grieved

That by the goddess he was still detained :

“ O Father Jove, and ye immortal gods

Let not a king who bears the sceptre now

Henceforth be mild and lenient ; nor regard 10

Justice ; nay, let him rather be severe,

Lawless his acts; not thus the godlike chief
Ulysses should in memory be held,
But as a father in his gentleness,
By all the people over whom he ruled. 15
He in that island suffers grievous woe
Within Calypso's halls, the nymph by force
Detains him there; he cannot reach his home;
No ships has he equipped with oars; no crew,
To bear him o'er the bosom of the deep; 20
And now they plot to slay his cherished son,
As he from sacred Pylos voyages home,
And Lacedæmon; whither he has gone
To seek for news touching his father's fate."

He who o'errules the thunder clouds replied: 25
"My daughter, what a speech has 'scaped thy lips!
For hast thou not thyself contrived this plan
So that Ulysses may return at last
And vengeance take? but now do thou conduct
Telemachus with skill, as well thou canst, 30
That he may scathless reach his native shore;
And that the suitors baffled, may sail back."

To Hermes also his loved son he spoke:

“Hermes, be thou a messenger for us,
And to the fair-haired nymph do thou announce 35
Our will unalterable; the return
Of the enduring hero to his home:
No guidance shall he have from gods or men,
But he shall sail upon a fragile raft,
Enduring hardships; on the twentieth day 40
He shall arrive at Scheria's fruitful shore,
Where the Phæacians dwell, blest as the gods;
Who as a god shall reverence the chief,
And in a ship shall send him to his home,
His much-loved native land; and give to him 45
Great store of bronze, of raiments, and of gold;
More than Ulysses would have brought from Troy,
If he had safe returned with all its spoil:
It is his destiny to see his friends,
And visit yet again once more in peace 50
His lofty palace, and his native shore.”

He spoke, nor disobeyed the Argus slayer,
He bound the wondrous sandals on his feet,
Ambrosial, golden; that o'er sea and land
Illimitable, bore him like the wind; 55

Took too the wand with which he charms to rest
The eyes of men; and opes them at his will:
This in his hand the Argus slayer held
As down from heaven aslant he winged his way,
And from Pieria lighted on the sea: 60
He skimmed the billows like the wild sea-mew,
Which o'er the dread abysses of the deep,
The lonely deep, pursues its fishy prey,
And bathes its feathers in the briny foam.
Thus Hermes flew athwart the countless waves; 65
And when at length he reached the distant isle
And trod firm land from off the purple sea,
He sought the spacious grotto where abode
The fair-haired nymph; and found her then within.
A blazing fire was burning on the hearth. 70
And from afar o'er all the island stole
The perfumed odors of the burning woods
Of fragile cedar, and the tree of life:
And she within sang with melodious voice,
And with a golden shuttle plied the loom. 75
A blooming grove around the grotto stood;
Alder and poplar, mixed with cypress sweet;

And long-winged birds upon the branches perched,
Falcons and owls, and chattering hooded crows,
Birds of the sea, who pastime take therein. 80
And all about the lovely grotto climbed
A blooming vine, luxuriant with grapes.
From fountains four which close together stood
The limpid water bubbled far and wide:
And from the turf so soft, the violet 85
And parsley sprang: even a god must gaze
On such a scene with wonder and delight.
There stood and gazed the guiding Argus slayer,
When he had gazed his fill, and all admired
Her spacious grot he entered then; nor failed 90
The lovely goddess him to recognise;
For to each other never are unknown
Immortals; though they far apart may dwell.
High-souled Ulysses was not then within,
He sat upon the shore as he was wont 95
And wept; his heart was torn with sighs and groans;
Tearful he gazed across the lonely sea.

The lovely goddess Hermes thus addressed
As on her bright and gleaming couch she sat:

“Tell me, O Hermes of the golden wand 100
Dear and beloved friend, why thou hast come?
Thy visits are not frequent heretofore :
Thy wishes only tell, my heart is prompt
To do for thee whatever may be done :
But first come in and welcome taste my cheer.” 105
Thus having said, the goddess for him laid
Herself a table with ambrosia piled,
And mixed the ruddy nectar in his cup:
The guiding Argus slayer ate and drank,
And when his appetite was satisfied 110
He with these words addressed her in reply :
“Goddess, of me, a god, thou dost demand
Why I have come; therefore at thy request
My message I will truly tell to thee.
Against my wishes Jove has sent me here; 115
Who of his own free will would travel o’er
This wide and dreary waste of the salt flood?
No city near, where men could offer up
Their sacrifice of choicest hecatombs
To us the gods? but ’tis not possible 120
For any god to cross the will of Jove,

The ægis-bearer, or evade his hests.

“They say a hero dwelleth now with thee
Who is the most unfortunate of those
Who for nine years for Priam’s city fought : 125
In the tenth year they sacked the citadel,
And sailed for home; but they on their return
Offended Pallas, who against them raised
A dreadful tempest, and a mighty sea :
And all his brave companions perished there. 130
But him the waves and tempests hither bore;
And him he orders thee to send away
Without delay; ’tis not his destiny
To perish here afar from all his friends;
But ’tis his fate to see them all again 135
And that he visit yet once more in peace
His lofty palace, and his native land.”

He spake, the lovely goddess was dismayed
And thus addressed him with these winged words :

“How cruel are ye gods! how envious! 140
Who grudge that goddesses should e’er enjoy
The love of mortal men; that one should choose
Without disguise a mortal for her spouse.

Thus rosy-fingered Dawn Orion chose ;
The gods who live in bliss straight envied her ; 145
And chaste Diana of the golden throne
Drew near and slew him in Ortygia,
With painless arrows, and a gentle death.
Thus also did the fair-haired Ceres yield
To passion ; and to Jason gave her love ; 150
And in a fallow field her favors gave :
Not long was Jove left uninformed of this
Who slew him with his flashing thunderbolt.
And thus ye gods grudge me my mortal love !
I saved him, clinging to his vessel's keel 155
Alone, when with his flashing thunderbolt
Jove struck his flying bark in the mid sea,
And shattered her amidst the gloomy waves ;
When all his comrades brave had perished there,
And him the waves and tempests bore to me. 160
I loved and cherished him ; and did intend
To give him immortality of youth :
But since no other god can cross the will,
Or 'scape the hests of ægis-bearing Jove,
E'en let him go ; since such is his command : 165

'Tis he who drives him o'er the lonely sea,
For I could never, never banish him :
Nor have I ships equipped with oars, nor crew
To bear him o'er the bosom of the deep :
But I will give him guileless counsel now 170
So that he safely reach his native shore."

The guiding Argus slayer her addressed :
"Send him away at once, and reverence
The wrath of Jove, lest in his jealousy
He may hereafter be incensed with thee." 175

Thus spoke the mighty god and disappeared.

Now that the goddess had Jove's mandate heard
Her steps she turned towards the dauntless chief :
She found him sitting on the beach ; his eyes
Were never dry from tears ; his gladsome life 180
Was wasted by his yearning for his home ;
And now the nymph herself had ceased to charm :
With her so loving he with little love
His nights perforce must spend in her arched grot ;
All day he sat upon the sands and rocks, 185
His heart with grief and sighs and groans was torn,
As shedding tears he gazed o'er the sad sea.

The lovely goddess standing near him spoke :
"Unhappy one, weep here no more for me,
Nor for my sake waste all thy life in grief; 190
For now I willingly will send thee home :
So come at once, and with the axe hew out
Tall beams; and form with them a spacious raft;
And fasten planks across it strong and high,
That it may bear thee o'er the stormy sea: 195
And bread and water, and the ruddy wine
I for thy sustenance will place on board,
So that thou may'st not starve; and garments too.
Moreover, I will send a favoring breeze
To waft thee safely to thy native shore: 200
For thus, alas! the gods in heaven decree,
And they are stronger in their will than I!"

She spoke; the suffering hero was dismayed,
And thus addressed her with these wing'd words:
"O goddess, surely thou hast other thoughts 205
Than sending me in safety to my home;
Who now commandest me upon a raft
To cross the deep; so terrible, so dread;
Which hardly ships can traverse, swift and strong,

When favored by the fairest wind from Jove. 210
Nay goddess, on the raft against thy wish
I will not venture, till thou swear to me
That thou toward me hast no ill design."

Thus spake Ulysses, and Calypso smiled;
The lovely goddess soothed him with her hand, 215
And called him kindly by his name and said:

"O cunning one, thy craft deserts thee never,
Why what a speech is this that thou hast made?
Bear witness earth, and heaven which spreads above,
Also the Stygian stream which flows below; 220
The oath most dread and binding to us gods,
That I to thee harbor no ill design;
But with the same regard and care for thee
I counsel and advise, as for myself
I would devise, had I an equal need: 225
Guileless are my intents; nor holds my breast
A heart of iron, but a most tender one."

The lovely nymph thus spoke and led the way,
And he straight in her footsteps followed close:
The goddess and the mortal reached the grot, 230
And there he sat upon the seat from which

Hermes had just arisen; and the nymph
Before him spread of every kind of food
Which mortals eat and drink for sustenance;
And she sat opposite the godlike chief; 235
And her attendant maids before her placed
Ambrosia and nectar; then at once
They on the ready viands laid their hands.
When thirst and hunger both were satisfied,
The lovely goddess thus began to speak: 240
 "Son of Laertes fertile in resource,
So thou wilt leave me; and wouldst start at once
For thy beloved home and native shore;
If it must be farewell! but didst thou know
The ills that fate has yet in store for thee, 245
Before thou reach again thy native land,
Thou wouldst remain with me in this abode,
And share my immortality; although
Thou weariest to see thy wife again;
And though for her thou pinest day by day: 250
In truth I may lay claim to no less charms
In form and countenance than she can boast;
No mortal woman may presume to vie

In form and beauty with us goddesses."

Wary Ulysses thus replied to her: 255

"Goddess divine, oh! be not vexed with me;

I know right well that my Penelope

Is frail and feeble in comparison

With thy most glorious form, and beauty rare;

For she is but a mortal; and thou art 260

Immortal, and thou hast immortal youth:

Yet I must long and weary every day

To see the day which greets my home return:

Yea, though a god into the gloomy deep

May hurl me back once more; this will I bear, 265

And keep a steadfast soul within my breast.

Already I have many ills endured,

And suffered toils in war and in the waves:

What yet I have to suffer must be borne."

He spoke; then set the sun, and twilight fell: 270

And in the inmost chamber of her grot,

They both together joyed in love's delights.

And when the rosy-fingered dawn appeared

Ulysses donned his tunic and his robe;

And in an ample garment, silver white, 275

Graceful and fine, the nymph herself arrayed ;
About her waist a golden girdle cast
Of wondrous beauty ; o'er her head a veil ;
Then for the chief's departure she prepared :
A ponderous axe of bronze she gave to him, 280
That he could deftly wield, with double edge,
The shapely handle made of olive wood ;
Also a polished adze : she led him then
To the remotest corners of the isle,
Where many lofty trees in plenty grew, 285
The alder, poplar, and the towering pine :
Dry seasoned wood, to float upon the wave :
When she had shown him where the tall trees grew,
The lovely goddess to her home returned.
He laboured hard and finished soon his task, 290
And twenty trees he felled with the sharp axe ;
Shaped them with skill, and straightened them by line :
And then the lovely goddess augers brought,
With which he bored the beams which he had hewed ;
And placed them side by side and hammered them 295
With nails together, and with strengthening bands.
And as the skilful shipwright would round off

And shape the hull of a stout merchant ship,
So did Ulysses shape his spacious raft.
And decks he built, fixed to the various ribs, 300
And finished all the work with planking strong :
A mast he made, and fitted with a yard ;
And helm and rudder to direct his course :
All round the raft he worked a weather board
Of osiers formed ; a shelter from the waves ; 305
Much wood he used his labor to complete.
Calypso also brought him cloth for sails,
And these he shaped and formed right skilfully ;
And fitted them with brails, and tacks, and sheets.
With levers then the raft complete he launched 310
And in the sea divine he floated it.

The fourth day came, and all was then prepared,
And on the fifth, Calypso, lovely nymph,
Dispatched him from her isle ; and gave to him
Garments both fair and fragrant ; and on board 315
Two skins she placed ; one full of dark red wine,
The other larger one with water filled ;
And in a wallet she provisions stored,
Food of all kinds, to give him sustenance ;

She sent him too a gentle favoring gale. 320

Godlike Ulysses was rejoiced at this

And spread his sail before the welcome breeze ;

And seated at the helm he steered his course

Right skilfully ; nor on his eyelids fell

Sleep ; as he watched afar the Pleiades ; 325

Boötes late to wheel towards the West ;

And bright she-bear, so often called the 'Wain ;'

Which circling in the sky for ever keeps

Watch on Orion ; she alone is doomed

Never to dip her beams in Ocean's baths ; 330

And her the goddess counselled him to keep

Still on his left, as o'er the deep he sailed.

For seventeen days he sailed across the deep,

And on the eighteenth day the land appeared,

The shadowy mountains of Phæacia, 335

The nearest land to him ; and like a shield

It loomed before him o'er the misty sea.

But the earth shaker, from the Æthiops

As he returned, from off the mountain crests

Of Solyma, descried him from afar : 340

He viewed him as he sailed across the main,

And deeply he was vexed ; he shook his head ;
And from his inmost heart he said these words :

“ Ah ha ! while I the Æthiops visited,
The gods it seems have changed again their plans ; 345
Ulysses now to the Phæacian land
Is fast approaching ; where it is his fate
To 'scape the woeful end which threatens him,
But I will yet on him full vengeance wreak.”

Thus saying he the clouds together piled, 350
And stirred the deep, his trident brandishing ;
And from all quarters raised the stormy winds,
Shrouded in driving mist the earth and sea,
And from the heavens, night sent sweeping down.
The East wind and the South, and gusty West 355
Were all abroad ; and nursed in piercing cold
The North, rolled on before it mighty waves.
Then sank the hero's heart, and shook his limbs ;
And grieving in his steadfast heart, he said :

“ Ah ! woe is me ! is this to be my end ? 360
I fear indeed the goddess told me true,
Who said that woes were yet in store for me,
Ere I should reach again my native land ;

And all this is fulfilled; for see how Jove
Enshrouds in driving mists the outstretched heaven,
And stirs the deep; and from all quarters rush
The tempests; sure destruction threatens me.
Oh! thrice and fourfold happy were ye Greeks
Who perished on the battle-field of Troy
In the Atreides' cause; far happier I, 370
If I had also died, and met my fate
Even on the day when thronging Trojans hurled
Their brazen pointed spears at me, who stood
Astride the corse of Peleus' son, just slain:
Then I had gained a tomb; and me the Greeks 375
Had honored with a glorious memory;
But now a wretched ending is my doom."

As he was speaking thus, a mighty wave
Careering wildly, struck him from on high,
Engulfed the raft, and hurled him in the sea, 380
And from the tiller wrenched his grasp; a squall
Descending from all winds, broke short the mast,
The yard and fluttering sail swept in the sea.
For long was he submerged beneath the deep,
And hardly struggled through the surging wave: 385

His garments weighed him down, Calypso's gift :
At last he rose, and sputtered out the foam
Bitter and salt, which streamed down from his head.
But though distressed, he still abandoned not
His raft; but seized it dashing through the waves 390
Scrambled on board, and scaped the threatened death.
The waves and currents drove it here and there,
As the north wind in Autumn o'er the plain
Before it drives the shreds of thistle down
Which close together hang; thus the fierce blasts 395
The raft drove up and down upon the sea :
The South wind now would hurl it to the North,
Tossed here and there a plaything; then the East
Would yield it to the wild will of the West.

But graceful Ino saw him there in woe, 400
Daughter of Cadmus, once a sweet-voiced maid,
Leucothea now; a goddess of the sea;
She pitied him, a miserable waif,
And like a water-hen on wing she rose
From out the depth of waters; and she sat 405
Upon the timbers of the raft and said :
" Unhappy one, oh ! why is Neptune now

So madly wroth, to work this woe on thee?
But though on thy destruction fiercely bent
He will not thee destroy, if thou wilt act 410
As I direct, and as thy prudence tells.
Throw off thy garments, and forsake thy raft,
And swimming with thy arms strike out towards
Thy destined refuge, the Phæacian land:
Here take this veil celestial, spread it out 415
Beneath thy breast, and thou wilt yet be saved:
But when thy hands have grasped firm land again
Unwind it then, and with averted face
Cast it afar into the purple sea."

The goddess spoke, and gave him then the veil, 420
And she in likeness of a water-hen
Dived down again beneath the billowy main,
And the dark wave concealed her from his sight:
The god-like chief was doubtful what to do,
And grieving in his steadfast heart he said: 425
"Alas! this goddess may have ill designs
Who now has urged me to forsake my raft;
But she will not persuade me; for I see
The land she calls my refuge is afar,

But I will do what seems to me the best; 430
As long as plank to plank together holds,
Here I remain, whate'er I may endure;
But when the raft is shattered by the waves
Then I will take to swimming; and I see
Nothing that I can better plan than this." 435

While he was thus debating with himself,
Earth-shaking Neptune sent a mighty surge.
Fearful and dread, with overhanging crest;
Which struck him; even as a boisterous wind
Scatters a heap of chaff piled on the floor, 440
And whirls about its fragments here and there,
Thus the strong planks were shattered of the raft.
Ulysses seized upon a floating plank,
And rode astride on it, as on a horse;
And of the garments which Calypso gave 445
He stripped himself, and spread beneath his breast,
The veil; and headlong in the sea he sprang,
And with his hands struck boldly out to swim:
The sea-god, the earth-shaker, this beheld;
Shaking his head, he said thus to himself: 450
"Now toss about the deep in misery,

Before thou reach this people loved by Jove,
And their society; I hope in truth
Thou wilt not crave a larger share of woe!"

Thus having said he urged his long-maned steeds,
And went to Aigæ, his august abode.

But then fresh schemes the child of Jove contrived,
The other winds she held fast in their course
And by her orders lulled them all to rest,
But raised a brisk north wind to lay the waves; 460
So that the noble chief might reach the land
Of the Phæacians, skilful with the oar;
And shun the death and fate which threatened him.
Two days and nights among the surging waves
He tossed; and oft his heart foreboded death; 465
When the third day the fair Dawn ushered in;
Then sank the gale, there was a windless calm:
As o'er the heaving swell he rose, he scanned
With eager gaze the near approaching shore.
And as returning life so welcome seems 470
To children watching by a father's bed
Who from a sore disease has suffered long,
Inflicted by an adverse Deity;

As they rejoice with gladness when the gods
Have rescued him from suffering and distress; 475
Ulysses thus rejoiced to see once more
The land and trees: he swam with eager strokes
Longing to tread upon firm land again.
But when he was no further from the shore
Than a loud shout could reach; he heard afar 480
The booming of the sea against the rocks:
The mighty billow roared, and broke in foam
As it was wildly hurled upon the strand;
No havens to give shelter to the ships
Nor creeks for refuge were there; all around 485
Sharp promontories, cliffs, and sea-washed rocks:
Then sank Ulysses' heart, and shook his limbs
And grieving in his steadfast soul he said:

“Alas! though Jove has me allowed once more
To see the land, which seemed beyond my hopes; 490
Though I have cloven through this watery gulf,
Yet at the threshold of the hoary sea
No loophole of escape appears; in front
The spines of jagged rocks; around me roar
The furious waves; sheer rises up the cliff 495

Without a cleft from out the water deep;
No holding for my feet to 'scape the death!
And if I strive to climb, a mighty wave,
Will hurl me back upon the stony crag;
Vain the attempt would be: if I return, 500
And onward swim, endeavouring to find
A sloping beach, or landing from the sea,
I sorely dread that suddenly a storm
May whirl me out again with heavy groans
To the broad sea, wherein the sea fish play: 505
And where perhaps some monster of the deep;
And many such does Amphitrité rear;—
May me devour; for well I am aware
That the earth-shaker is enraged with me."

While thus debating in his mind, a surge 510
Caught him, and flung him on the rugged shore;
Flayed would have been his skin, and crushed his bones,
Had not the blue-eyed goddess prompted him
At once to seize with both his hands a rock;
Though groaning he held on with all his strength; 515
Until the mighty surge had o'er him passed;
The onward billow he escaped unhurt,

But the back flowing water swept him off,
And tossed him out afar into the deep.
As the sea polypus, dragged from his lair, 520
Displays dependent from his claw-like arms,
Gravel and stones; thus on the rocks remained
The skin and flesh from off his clinging hands:
And he was buried in the mighty surge.

The chief had perished then, in spite of fate 525
Had not the blue-eyed goddess him inspired
With thoughtful courage; and above the waves
Which broke upon the strand he rose again;
And swam to seaward, looking on the shore
With eager gaze, if haply he might find 530
A shelving beach, or inlet from the sea.
Swimming, at last he reached a river's mouth,
Which gently flowing lured him on to land;
No longer rock bound, sheltered from the wind;
The stream he welcomed, and to its genius prayed:
"Hear me, O god, whoever thou may'st be,
I now draw near to thee so much adored,
Fleeing from Neptune's wrath, and from the sea:
The wanderer is worthy of regard

E'en from the gods, who comes in sore distress 540
As I, who many woes have suffered come,
And supplicate thy gentle stream and thee;
Oh! pity me, who am thy suppliant."

He spoke; at once the god his current smoothed,
And lulled his waves, and round him made a calm, 545
And brought him safely to the river's brink;
He rested then his knees and sturdy hands;
His heart was worn with battling with the sea,
Swollen was his body; the salt water ran
In streams from mouth and nostrils; out of breath 550
And speechless there he lay, and powerless;
For dreadful was the toil he had endured.
At last he breathed again, and gathered strength;
And then the goddess' veil he threw away
And gave it to the seaward flowing stream, 555
Which down its current bore it on the wave,
And Ino took it in her gentle hands.

He left the river; on its rushes green
He threw himself and kissed the welcome soil,
Then grieving in his steadfast soul he said: 560
"Alas, for me! what is to be my fate?"

For if upon the river banks I pass
The weary night, I fear the cruel frost
And chilling dew with faintness will o'ercome
Me gasping now for breath; and the cold breeze 565
Will blow from off the river ere the dawn:
And if I climb the hill, and lay me down
'Midst the thick bushes of its shady grove,
And cold and weariness will let me rest,
I fear if gentle sleep should visit me, 570
That I to some wild beast may fall a prey."

At last to him in doubt this seemed the best;
A wood he sought, which in the open grew,
Close to the waterside; two bosky shrubs
Together stood; of fruitful olives one, 575
Of wild the other; no mist-laden wind
Could with its blast search through their foliage,
Nor could the sun pierce through them with his beams,
Nor any shower through them penetrate;
So close and thick they interlacing grew: 580
Ulysses there lay down, and with his hands
An ample lair he heaped up for himself;
For fallen leaves lay thick upon the ground;

Enough in winter, in the bitter cold,
Two or three wayfarers to shelter there. 585
The suffering chief rejoiced to see the leaves,
And lay down in their midst, and heaped them round.
As one who in a solitary place,
Remote, where dwellers there are none, may hide
A burning brand beneath the ashes dark, 590
Nursing the seed of fire, lest when afar
The spark burst forth and kindle into flame;
Thus did Ulysses shroud himself with leaves;
And Pallas o'er his eyes soft slumber cast,
And closed his jaded eyelids in repose, 595
That he might rest from all his weary toil.

BOOK VI.



ARGUMENT.

Nausicaa and her maids—They guide Ulysses to the gates
of the city of the Phæacians.

DAYS 33-34.

WHILE he who had so many trials borne,
Slept there, worn out with weariness and toil,
Minerva to the realm and city went
Of the Phæacians; who formerly
Abode in Hypereia's stretching plains; 5
Near the Cyclopés, an imperious race
Of greater might than they, who them despoiled.
Nausithous, the godlike, moved them thence,
And settled them in Scheria's distant isle,
Afar from men who know the arts of life. 10
Around the city he upreared a wall;

And houses built, and temples for the gods,
And lands divided ; but subdued by death
He in his time had now to Hades gone :
And now Alcinous, who from the gods 15
Had wisdom learnt, was reigning in his stead.
The blue-eyed goddess to his palace went,
The noble chief's arrival to prepare.
She sought the beauteous chamber, where reposed
The maiden daughter of Alcinous, 20
Nausicaa ; whose form and comeliness
With the immortals vied ; and near to her
On either side her door, attendants twain,
Both lovely as the Graces took their rest.
The gleaming chamber doors were safely shut. 25
The goddess entered like a breath of air,
Approached the virgin's couch, and o'er her head
She stood and spoke to her ; the form she took
Of a young maiden of Nausicaa's age,
Daughter of Dymas, famous on the sea, 30
Who was her bosom friend ; and in her shape
The blue-eyed goddess thus addressed the maid :
“ Nausicaa, why art thou indolent ?

Thy lovely garments lie uncared for, soiled,
And now thy wedding day draws on apace, 35
When thou shouldst deck thyself in raiment fair,
And all thy wardrobe thou shouldst ready make
For him who leads thee to his home from thine.
A good report of such good housewifery
Not only pleases men, but is a joy 40
Both to thy father and thy honored mother.
But let us both together go at dawn
And wash thy clothes; I will thy fellow be,
That thou may'st all things have in readiness;
For now not long wilt thou remain a maid, 45
Since many noble youths are wooing thee,
Of our Phæacian race, which is thine own.
But ask thy noble father ere the dawn
To yoke for thee the chariot and the mules,
To bear thy girdles, robes, and garments fine. 50
'Twere better too that thou thyself shouldst ride,
As the fresh pools for washing are afar."

The goddess spake these words and disappeared,
Straight to Olympus; where they say for aye
The gods possess their everlasting seat; 55

Which never storm disturbs, or shower chills;
No snow falls there; but ever shining light
Pervades the calm serene, without a cloud :
There do the happy gods in happiness,
Pass all their days; thither the blue-eyed went, 60
Ascending, when she left the mortal maid.

Fair dawn appeared, and from her slumber woke
The maiden who was robed so gracefully;
She wondered at her dream, and through the house
Her mother and her father dear she sought 65
To tell them all; she found them both within :
Her mother sat with her attendant maids
Close by the hearth, spinning the purple wool :
And issuing from the door she met the king,
To hold a council with his noble chiefs, 70
To which the people had now summoned him.
Approaching her dear father, thus she spoke :

“My father dear, wilt thou now yoke for me
The lofty chariot with swift running wheels,
That I may take our garments fine, which now 75
Are lying soiled, and wash them in the stream?
It is but right that thou; who oft must meet

In council with the noblest in the land,
In fair and cleanly garments shouldst appear:
And in thy palace thou hast now five sons, 80
Two married, three yet in the bloom of youth:
And they are ever wanting garments fresh
To deck them at the dance which they frequent;
And all these matters are my special care."

Thus spoke the maid; her bashfulness forbade
That she should even to her father dear
Her sponsals mention, though a pleasing thought:
All this he plainly saw, and answered her:

"My child, the mules I will not thee refuse,
Nor anght which thou desirest; prithee go; 90
The servants shall the chariot yoke for thee
And ready make, high built, with rolling wheels,
And fitted with a tilt thy clothes to bear."

He ordered then his servants, who obeyed:
Outside the court, the car with rolling wheels 95
They ready made, and to it yoked the mules:
The maiden brought the beauteous garments out
And placed them in the well-appointed car:
Her mother then a casket stored with food,

For sustenance ; and dainties placed therein ; 100
And filled with wine a goatskin ; then the maid
Mounted the chariot ; in a golden flask
They gave her olive oil limpid and clear,
For her and her attendants at the bath.
She took the whip and seized the shining reins 105
And onward whipped the mules, with clattering feet
They stoutly bore the garments and herself ;
Nor unattended was she ; for on foot
Her serving maidens followed on the way.

To the fair running stream they quickly came, 110
Where the abundant pools of water clear
Gushed forth ; that well might cleanse the foulest
stains.

The mules they then unyoked from out the car
And turned them loose to crop the fragrant grass,
Along the borders of the eddying stream. 115
The maidens then the garments lifted out,
And plunged them in the dark and welling pools,
And trod them with their feet with eager toil.
When every stain was washed and cleansed away,
They spread them on the pebbles of the beach, 120

Just where the sea had left them clean and dry.
After a bath, with shining olive oil
They all themselves anointed, and their meal
They took beside the margin of the brook,
Leaving the garments spread upon the shore 125
To dry beneath the bright beams of the sun.
And when they all, the lady and her maids,
Had hunger satisfied, they threw aside
Their veils, and with the ball their pastime took.
Nausicaa, the white-armed led the sport, 130
Like Artemis the arrow Queen she seemed,
As she descends the aëry mountain top
Of Taygetus, or lofty Erymanth;
Chasing the wild boar, and the flying stag:
Around her sport and dance the woodland nymphs, 135
The children of the ægis-bearing Jove;
Latona joys to see her daughter fair,
Her graceful head and brow o'ertop them all,
Amongst the lovely she the loveliest:
Thus the proud virgin far outshone her maids. 140

But when the time was come for their return,
That they should seek their home; they yoked the mules,

And folded up with care the garments fine.

Then blue-eyed Pallas other plans contrived
So that Ulysses might awake and see 145
The lovely maiden, who should him conduct
To the Phæacian city where she dwelt.
At one of her attendant maidens then
The Lady threw the ball; and missed her aim;
In the deep current fell the flying ball: 150
Then long and loud they shouted, and awoke
The god-like chief, and sitting in his lair
He wondered in his mind what this should mean:

“Ah woe is me! among what kind of men
Have I arrived? Are they a savage race, 155
Given to deeds of violence and wrong,
Or gently nurtured do they fear the gods?
The shrill-toned voice of women met my ear,
Perhaps of nymphs who haunt the mountain peaks,
Or sources of the stream, or grassy meads: 160
At all events I am not distant far
From human beings, speaking human tongues;
And I will strive to find out who they be.”

Thus spake Ulysses, from the thicket's shade

He issued forth, and with his stalwart hand 165
From a luxuriant tree he wrenched a branch
With foliage dense adorned; and round his loins
He wound it, to conceal his nakedness.
Thus issues forth the lion in his strength
Through storm and rain from out his mountain lair;
His eyeballs gleam like flame as he pursues 171
The sheep or oxen or the flying deer;
If hunger drive him he will e'en assail
The sheepfold, and the homestead so secure:
Thus did Ulysses naked as he was 175
Prepare the fair-haired maidens to approach,
For urgent need compelled him so to do.
Uncouth he seemed to them—befouled with brine;
And far in terror o'er the beach they fled:
The daughter of Alcinous alone 180
Stood fast; with courage Pallas her inspired,
Nor suffered fear to seize upon her limbs:
She stood before him; and he was in doubt
Whether he should approach the lovely maid,
And as a suppliant embrace her knees, 185
Or whether at a distance he should beg

With soft and flattering words, that she would deign
To give him clothing for his nakedness,
And to her native city him conduct.
At last this seemed to him the better plan, 190
That he should at a distance her beseech
With gentle words; lest she should take offence
At him approaching to embrace her knees;
Therefore he spoke this soft and wily speech:
 “Lady, thy favour I implore; be thou 195
Goddess or mortal? if a goddess then
Thy beauty, and thy figure, and thy grace,
Proclaim thee Artemis, the child of Jove:
But if a mortal, and a child of earth,
Thrice blest thy father and thy mother are; 200
Thrice blest thy brothers; thou must ever be
To them a source of joyfulness and pride,
Whenever with their eyes they follow thee,
And watch thy lovely figure in the dance:
But blest he will be, far above them all 205
Who wins thee for his bride, and leads thee home.
For never mortal have I seen so fair;
Nor youth nor maiden; wonder holds me chained:

Thus at Apollo's shrine in Delos once
I saw the graceful offshoot of the palm ; 210
Thither I went with many followers,
And on my way I suffered many woes ;
And long I gazed in wonder at its grace,
For never sprang so fair a plant from earth :
And Lady, thus with admiration now 215
And wonder mixed with awe I gaze on thee :
I did not venture to embrace thy knees,
Though direful suffering has befallen me ;
For yesterday I 'scaped the stormy flood,
The twentieth day it was ; and all that time 220
The waves and driving storms with respite none
Had borne me with them from Ogygia's isle,
And now an outcast, fate has thrown me here ;
And even here I yet must suffer ill,
Nor can I hope that now my woes will cease ; 225
For still the gods have woes in store for me.
Pity me, Lady ; after trials sore
I come to thee the first ; none else I see,
No dwellers in the city or the land :
Oh ! guide me to thy city ; deign to give 230

A rag to clothe me ; if thou hast to spare
A wrapper for the garments thou hast brought :
So may the gods fulfil thy dearest wish,
A husband, and a home, and household peace.
There is no greater, truer bliss on earth, 235
Than when the husband and the wife enjoy
A home, with constant thoughts of mutual love :
Sad for their foes, but joyous to their friends ;
And they themselves the wondrous blessing know.”
Nausicaa, the lily-armed, replied : 240
“Stranger, it seems thou art not ill-disposed,
Nor dost thou want for sense ; Olympian Jove
Distributes happiness to whom he will
Among us mortals, whether good or bad :
What he inflicts on thee with patience bear. 245
Here in our city, and our native land
Thou shalt not clothing lack, nor aught beside
Which it is seemly we should give to thee,
Whom we have chanced to meet in sore distress :
And to our city I will thee conduct ; 250
My people’s name I also will declare.
This land and city the Phæacians own :

I am the daughter of Alcinous,
The mighty chieftain; the Phæacians
Acknowledge his dominion and his rule." 255

She spoke and summoned thus her fair-haired maids:
"Stand fast my maidens; wherefore have ye fled?
Deem ye this man to be our enemy?
No mortal man there is, nor e'er will be,
Who dares approach to the Phæacian land 260
With hostile violence; we are beloved
By the immortal gods; afar we dwell
Encircled by the ever restless sea;
No other men have intercourse with us:—
But as this wanderer has reached our shores 265
In sore distress; him we are bound to tend:
To Jove belong the stranger and the poor,
Under his guard they are; all we can give
However small, we should give willingly.
Therefore my maidens to the stranger now 270
Give food and drink, and bathe him in the stream
Where you can find some shelter from the wind."

She spoke; her maidens to each other called
And stayed their flight; and to a sheltered place

Where he might take his bath, they led the chief; 275
For thus Nausicaa commanded them:

Tunic, and robe, and garments placed near him;

Gave him the golden flask, of limpid oil;

And in the stream invited him to bathe.

Ulysses then addressed them with these words: 280

“Leave me, O maidens, I will wash away
Myself the brine which stains my shoulders now,
And afterwards with oil anoint myself;
'Tis long indeed, since I have this enjoyed!

My modesty forbids I should appear 285

Naked before fair maidens such as ye.”

Thus spoke the godlike chief, and they retired,
And to their mistress told what he had said.

He in the stream washed off the briny stains

Which clung about his back and shoulders broad; 290

And from his head he cleansed the crusted foam

Which the salt water left: when he had bathed

He then applied the shining olive oil,

And donned the garments which the virgin gave.

Then Pallas, child of Jove, around him threw 295

A greater majesty of form and grace,

And from his head she shook the waving curls
As beauteous as the hyacinthine flower.

And as the cunning workman who has learnt
From Vulcan and Minerva all his art, 300

O'erlays with gold the silver; and with pains
His graceful work to full perfection brings;

So did the goddess o'er his head and form
A wondrous charm and fascination shed.

Then far along the shore he went, and sat 305
Shining with beauty, and with manly grace.

The maid with admiration gazed at him,
And to her fair attendants thus she spoke:
"My white-armed maidens, listen to my words,

'Tis not without the purpose of the gods 310
Who in Olympus dwell, this man has come

To visit our Phæacian noble race:

At first indeed he seemed to me but mean,
But now he looks more like a heavenly god.

Oh! would that I might such a husband win 315
Among the people dwelling in the land!

Or would that he himself would stay with us!

But maidens quickly give him food and drink."

She spoke; they heard her and obeyed her words,
And food and drink they placed before the chief, 320
And eagerly Ulysses ate and drank;
Long had he been deprived of sustenance.

Then this moreover did Nausicaa;
She placed the folded garments in the car,
Yoked the surefooted mules, and to the seat 325
She mounted; and with kindly cheering words
She urged Ulysses forward, and thus spoke:

“Up, stranger, to the city follow us;
I to my father's palace thee will guide,
Where thou wilt see the noblest of our race: 330
But as thou seemest not to want for sense,
I tell thee what I wish thee now to do.
Long as we journey through the open fields
And till'd lands, with my attendant maids
Keep close behind the chariot and the mules; 335
And I will thee direct along the way;
But leave us when the city we draw near:
A lofty wall with towers girds it round,
And fair on either side a haven spreads;
Narrow is the approach, and by the road 340

The galleys lie, which to the oar stroke swing,
Each hauled upon its slip ; they line the strand :
And there is standing Neptune's beauteous fane,
And round it is the market-place, laid out
With massive stones firm bedded in the earth : 345
There for the black hulled ships with busy care
The tackle they equip ; the ropes, the sails ;
And shape the oars ; for the Phæacians
Delight not in the arrow or the bow ;
Rather in masts, and oars, and gallant ships, 350
In which they joy to cross the stormy sea.
I dread the gossip of the people there,
Lest the ill-natured should find fault with me,
And some inferior meeting me should say :
'Who is the stranger with Nausicaa 355
So handsome, and so tall ? where met she him ?
No doubt this will a husband be for her ;
Some foreigner she brings from over sea,
Fresh from his ship, since none will suit her here :
Perhaps some god besought with many vows 360
Descends from heaven in answer to her prayers,
And evermore will keep her as his own :

'Tis better she elsewhere a husband seek,
Since she despises our Phæacian youths,
Though many of the noblest woo her now !' 365
Thus would they talk, and it would shame me much ;
For I myself would blame another maid
Who did the like ; did she associate
Against her father's and her mother's will,
With any man with whom she chanced to meet, 370
Who did not come to woo her openly.
Therefore O stranger to my words give heed,
That thou may'st quickly learn to find the way
Which to my father's palace will thee guide.
Close by the road appears Minerva's grove 375
Beauteous with poplars ; there a fountain flows,
And meadows stretch around, and there thou'lt see
My father's blooming gardens and domain ;
Not farther from the city do these lie
Than a loud shout would reach the listening ear ; 380
There thou must sit and wait, to give us time
To reach the city and my father's house ;
And when thou deemest we have reached our home,
The city thou may'st enter then at once,

And to Alcinous' palace ask the way, 385

My noble father's; right well is it known,

And any child can lead thee on the road;

For no Phæacian palace rivals this,

The palace of the chief Alcinous.

But when the courtyard thou hast entered in, 390

Pass quickly through the hall, until thou find

My mother; by the hearth she has her seat

Before the glowing fire; and there she weaves

The threads of wool as purple as the sea,

A marvel to behold; and she reclines 395

Against the column, with her maids behind her.

And close to it is placed my father's seat,

There like a god he sits and drinks his wine:

But pass him by, and seize my mother's knees

Entreating her; that thou may'st quickly know 400

The joy of home return; if so it be

Thou dwell'st afar; and if thou dost desire

With longing yet again to see thy friends,

And reach once more thy home and native land."

She said; and with her shining whip she urged 405

The mules; who quickly left the flowing stream;

Swiftly they went, and nimbly plied their feet;
She drove with skill, and governed well their pace,
So her attendants and the godlike chief
Could follow easily the car on foot. 410

The sun set, and they reached the famous grove
Sacred to Pallas; Ulysses there sat down;
And to the child of Jove addressed his prayer:

“Unconquered child of ægis-bearing Jove
Hear now the prayer of me, a castaway, 415
Whose prayers thou heretofore deign’dst not to hear
When Neptune, the earth-shaker in his might
Wrecked me; from the Phæacian people now
Grant me to win kind pity and regard.”

Thus prayed he, and Minerva heard his prayer, 420
Though she appeared not visibly; she feared
Her father’s brother; who with bitter wrath
The godlike chief Ulysses still pursued,
Ere he should reach his native land again.

BOOK VII.

ARGUMENT.

Ulysses enters the city of the Phæacians—Palace and Garden
of Alcinous—Reception of Ulysses.

DAY 34.

THUS prayed the chief who had so much endured:

Meanwhile the sturdy mules had borne the maid
Back to the city; when she had arrived
Before her father's stately palace gates,
She stopped the mules; her brothers gathered round
Beauteous as gods, the mules they straight unyoked
And bore the garments all within the house:
The maiden to her chamber bent her steps.
Eurymedusa made a fire for her,
Her aged waiting-woman; whom the ships, 10
Which to the oar-stroke swing to either hand,

Had from Epirus brought; and who was chosen
To be a gift of honour to the king,
Alcinous, the ruler of their race,
Whom all the people as a god obeyed: 15
And she within his palace halls had nursed
Nausicaa the lily-armed; for her
A fire she kindled and her meal prepared.

Ulysses to the city hastened then,
And Pallas in her favor to the chief 20
A misty cloud enrolled about his form;
Lest any one of the Phæacians,
That haughty race, might chance to meet with him,
And ask him who he was with gibing words.
As to the lovely city he drew near 25
The blue-eyed Pallas met him there herself;
A youthful maid the goddess seemed to be,
Bearing a pitcher; in his path she stood;
The godlike chief addressed her with these words:
"Young maiden, wilt thou guide me in the way 30
Towards the palace of Alcinous,
Who is the ruler of these people here?
For I a stranger, and in wretchedness,

Have hither come from a far distant shore ;
And no one do I know of those who dwell 35
In this thy city, and thy native land."

The blue-eyed goddess answered in reply :
"Master, right gladly will I show the way,
It is not far from where my father dwells :
But follow me in silence, and take care 40
Not to address or question whom you meet ;
For hardly do they suffer strangers here,
Nor do they greet with hospitality
A foreigner, who comes from foreign lands :
Trusting to their swift ships they scour the seas 45
As rovers, under the earth-shaker's guard ;
Their ships are fleet as winged birds, or thought."

Thus having said Minerva led the way,
And he the goddess' footsteps followed close ;
Those famous sailors the Phæacians, 50
Observed him not as through their town he passed,
Even in their midst ; the goddess stayed their sight ;
The mighty goddess with the waving locks
Who favored him, around him spread a mist.
Ulysses gazed with wonder at the port, 55

The gallant ships, the market-place, and where
The heroes council held ; the lofty walls,
Far-stretching, fenced with stakes, a wondrous sight.
But when they reached the palace of the king,
The blue-eyed goddess thus addressed the chief: 60
 " This, master, is the house thou askest me
To show thee ; thou wilt find the noble chiefs
Regaling there ; but do thou enter in
With no misgiving mind ; a gallant man,
In all adventures, aye, the better man, 65
Will gain his end, although unknown he be,
And though a stranger from a foreign land.
The queen thou first wilt see within the hall ;
Arête is the name they give to her,
Descended from the self-same stock whence sprung 70
Alcinous the king ; for Neptune first
Who shakes the earth, begat Nausithous, ..
From Peribœa of the beauteous form,
The youngest daughter of Eurymedon,
Who o'er the haughty giants held the rule ; 75
He and that lawless race were swept away ;
But Neptune's love she won ; and she brought forth

Nausithous, who the Phæacians ruled ;
And from Nausithous Rhexenor sprang,
Alcinous also ; but the former chief 80
Apollo of the silver bow struck down,
A youthful bridegroom ; in his halls he left
An only daughter, and no son behind him ;
Arête she ; and her Alcinous
Took for his consort, and he honoured her 85
As among women who men's housewives are,
None ever yet was honoured on the earth.
Thus she is held in heartfelt reverence
By her dear children and Alcinous,
And by the people ; who look up to her 90
As if she were a goddess, and her greet
With acclamations when she visits them.
No goodly disposition does she lack ;
Gentle to women, and when men fall out
She with good will dissolves their enmity : 95
If thou canst only win her kind regard,
Thou well may'st hope again to see thy friends,
The roof of thine own home, and native shore."
Blue-eyed Minerva vanished at these words ;

The lovely land of Scheria she left 100

Crossing the barren sea ; to Marathon,

And Athens, with the spacious streets she came ;

And entered there Erechtheus' stately fane.

Meanwhile Ulysses bent his steps towards

Alcinous' palace ; many anxious thoughts 105

Surged through his mind while he was standing there,

Ere he across the brazen threshold trod.

For as the lustre of the sun and moon

Shone forth the palace of the mighty chief :

On either hand extended brazen walls, 110

From outer threshold to the inner court ;

And round the walls a cornice ran of bronze,

And golden gates enclosed the stately pile ;

And from the brazen threshold-floor up sprang

Door-posts of silver ; silver was the beam 115

Which formed the lintel ; the door ring of gold.

And gold and silver dogs on either hand

Were standing there ; which with consummate art,

Vulcan had fashioned ; aye to be the guard

Of the abode of proud Alcinous ; 120

Immortal were they, indestructible.

And all around the walls were couches set,
From outer threshold to the inmost court;
On these the finest drapery was spread
With tapestry work of women, deftly wrought; 125
On these the chiefs of the Phæacians sat
Eating and drinking, lavish was their cheer;
And golden statues stood on pedestals
Of youths, with burning torches in their hands,
To light by night the revellers in the hall. 130
And in the palace fifty serving maids
Ground ever in the mill the yellow grain :
As numerous, and restless as the leaves
Which grow upon the lofty poplar-tree
Were others sitting, busy with the loom; 135
And turned the spindle ; while the limpid oil
From the close woven linen trickled down.
For as the men of the Phæacians
Excel all other races in their skill
In sailing gallant ships across the seas, 140
Thus are their women skilful at the loom ;
Pallas has gifted them with genius rare
And a consummate skill in workmanship.

Without the court, and by its gate extends
An orchard of four acres, girt with walls; 145
And lofty blooming trees are growing there;
The pear, pomegranate, and the apple-tree,
With goodly fruit; olive and luscious fig.
On these the fruit ne'er withers, never fails,
In winter and in summer through the year: 150
Aye the soft zephyr sprouts the opening bud,
And ripens the fruit mature; pear follows pear,
Apple succeeds to apple, fig to fig,
One grape cluster another follows fast.
A plot of teeming vines is planted there, 155
Some of its fruit is drying in the sun,
Some gathered ripe, some trodden in the press.
On the same stock are found the clusters green,
The budding flower, just bursting into bloom,
And fruit just turning to a darker hue. 160
And at the vineyard's foot throughout the year
Trim beds of flowers in brilliant colors glow;
Of fountains twain, one flows in many rills
Through all the garden; by another course
The other 'neath the threshold of the hall 165

Into the lofty courtyard throws its jet;
And there from it the people water draw :
These gifts the gods gave to Alcinous.

There stood Ulysses, and with wonder gazed ;
When he had gazed his fill, and all admired, 170
He straightway crossed the threshold of the hall ;
And found the chiefs of the Phæacians
Pouring libations to the watchful one,
The Argus slayer ; and to him the last
They made libation, thinking of repose. 175
Godlike Ulysses passed across the hall
Concealed in mist, which Pallas o'er him spread,
Until he reached Arête and the King ;
And round her knees Ulysses threw his arms ;
Then the thick cloud was rolled away from him, 180
And all in silence on the hero gazed
Throughout the hall ; and wondered as they gazed.
Ulysses his entreaty thus began :

“ Arête, from divine Rhexenor sprung ;
I to thy husband, and before thy feet 185
Come as a suppliant, having much endured ;
And to the guests thou entertainest here ;

To whom the gods vouchsafe a happy life,
And that the goods which they possess at home,
And honors which the state has given to them, 190
In the due time may to their children fall.

But now with prompt good will afford to me
A speedy conduct to my native shore;
Long severed from my friends I suffer woe."

Thus saying 'midst the ashes of the hearth 195
He sat down by the fire; no word was said,
Till Echinéus silence broke at last,

The oldest lord of the Phæacians,
Most skilled in eloquence and ancient lore;
Of his good will and wisdom, thus he spoke: 200

"Alcinous, it is not well for thee
Nor seemly, that this stranger be allowed
To sit amidst the ashes of the hearth:
All look to thee and hang upon thy words;
Do thou at once arise, and place thy guest 205
Upon an honored seat; and straight command
The heralds in the bowl to mix the wine,
That we may due libations make to Jove,
The Thunderer, who favors suppliants;

And for this stranger, let thy stewardess 210

Prepare a meal from all her plenteous stores."

And when Alcinous of might divine

Had heard these words, he taking by the hand

The valiant chief of infinite resource,

Upraised him from the hearth; and made him sit 215

Upon a gorgeous chair, from which he moved

Laodamas, his son, who loved brave deeds,

Who next him sat, and dearest was to him.

Meanwhile to wash his hands a serving maid

From a rich golden ewer water poured 220

Into a silver basin, and laid out

The polished board; the modest stewardess

Served bread, and choice of viands from her store,

Right willingly; of these the suffering chief,

Ulysses ate and drank: Alcinous 225

The mighty king, his herald thus addressed:

"Pontonous, now mix the fragrant draught,

And hand it round to all within the hall;

That we may our libations pour to Jove,

The Thunderer, who favors suppliants." 230

He spoke; Pontonous straight mixed the wine,

And passed again the luscious cup to all ;
And when they had libations made, and drunk
Until the lust for drink was satisfied,
Alcinous addressed them with these words : 235
“ Ye lords and chiefs of the Phæacians,
List that ye hear the words I crave to say :
Now that our feast is ended, seek your homes,
And take your rest ; but by to-morrow's dawn
Let us in full assembly gather here 240
The seignors of the state, to greet our guest,
And to the gods make solemn sacrifice :
And afterwards we will deliberate
How by our guidance, and without delay,
This stranger, free from weariness and toil, 245
May reach with joy again his native land,
Although his dwelling be afar from us ;
That no mischance or ill may him befall
Ere he reach home ; where he must undergo
Whatever destiny prepares for him ; 250
And what the Fates inexorable spun
In his life's web, the day that he was born.
But if it be that an immortal one,

Now visits us from heaven, it would seem
That something new for us the gods prepare : 255
For they, the gods, have ever heretofore
Appeared to us in plain and open guise ;
Not only at our solemn hecatombs,
But even at our feasts they sit with us :
And if a solitary wayfarer 260
Among us, chance to meet with them alone,
They never shun him ; for we are allied
And kindred to them, as the Cyclops are ;
And as the giants are, that savage race."

Wary Ulysses answered in reply : 265
"Alcinous, think otherwise of me,
In nought do I the immortal ones resemble
Who in this heaven dwell, which o'er us spreads,
In mind or body ; but a mortal I :
Think of the human beings thou hast known 270
Most steeped in wretchedness ; with them in truth
I in my sufferings might well compare :
Yes, I could even greater ills recount,
All which I suffered by the gods' decrees ;
But though afflicted thus, permit me now 275

To take my meal; there is no sharper pang
Than gnawing hunger; which asserts its sway
Though other ills may seize and vex the soul:
'Tis thus with me, although possessed with grief
This drives me now to eat and drink my fill, 280
And to forget all else I have endured.

But hasten, I entreat, at early dawn
To give me conduct to my native land;
Me wretched, who have borne so many woes!
I die with longing yet to see again 285
My own domain, my household, and the roof
Above my spacious palace, and my home."

He spoke, they all applauded and approved
To send away the stranger to his home,
Since he with so much wisdom had discoursed. 290
When thirst and hunger both were satisfied
Each to his home returned, and took his rest.

The godlike chief was left within the hall;
Near him Arête and Alcinous sat;
Meanwhile the servants cleared away the feast. 295
White-armed Arête then took up the word,
The robe, the tunic, and the garments fair

She saw and recognised; for she herself
Had wrought and made them with her serving-maids;
Therefore with winged words she him addressed: 300
“Now stranger I must question thee myself;
Who art thou? who these garments gave to thee?
Didst thou not say that thou a wanderer
O'er the broad sea, wast cast upon our shore?”

Wary Ulysses answered in reply: 305

“O queen, it is a dismal tale to tell,
The heavenly ones have sent me many woes;
But I will tell thee all thou askest me.
The isle Ogygia lies afar from this,
Nestled among the waters; the abode 310
Of Atlas' child, Calypso, queen of spells;
A mighty goddess with fair waving locks:
She has no intercourse with gods or men;
Me only, me unhappy, destiny
Drove to the shelter of her hearth and home: 315
For Jove had with his flashing thunderbolt
Shattered my flying bark in the mid sea;
And all my gallant comrades perished there:
I clinging to my oary vessel's keel

During nine days was tossed about the deep; 320
And on the tenth, in the dark shade of night,
Me the gods cast upon Ogygia's isle :
There dwells Calypso of the waving locks,
A mighty goddess; she received' me there,
Cherished with loving care, and did intend 325
To give me immortality of youth ;
But she could never bend my will to this.
For seven long years I staid there; with my tears
The beauteous garments which Calypso gave,
I still bedewed; when the eighth year was come, 330
She, either swayed by the commands of Jove,
Or of her own free will, bade me depart.
She sent me on a raft, with planks contrived ;
And many gifts of corn, and fragrant wine,
And garments beautiful, she gave to me : 335
She sent me too a gentle favouring breeze.
For seventeen days I sailed across the deep,
And on the eighteenth day, the misty peaks
Of this thy land appeared ; and I rejoiced,
Ill-fated yet to be ; for misery 340
In plenty had I yet to undergo ;

Which Neptune, the earth-shaker on me sent:
The winds he stirred to bar me from my course,
And raised a mighty sea; nor did the raft
Afford me safety, groaning at my fate; 345
For it at last was shattered by the storm.
But swimming I passed o'er the watery gulf,
Till wind and water brought me to thy shore:
But as I strove to land, the broken surge
Caught me, and hurled me on the desert strand, 350
Against the rocks; I struggled back to sea
And swam still on, till I a river gained,
And on its banks seemed the best place to land,
Not rock-bound, and well sheltered from the wind.
I fell upon the earth to gather breath; 355
Ambrosial night descended; I lay down,
Far from the stream which draws its floods from heaven,
Among the thickets; and around me heaped
Dead leaves; the god deep slumber sent on me.
And there all night I slept among the leaves, 360
With wearied heart; through dawn till past midday:
The sun sloped westwards when my slumber passed;
And then thy daughter's maidens on the shore,

I saw disporting; she herself with them
Lovely as any goddess to behold. 365

I supplicated her; nor did she fail
In gentle kindness; from one so young,
Chance met, I had not dared to hope so much;
For youth is ever heedless; but from her
I food in plenty, and bright wine received; 370
Besides she bade me bathe me in the stream,
And gave me too these garments which I wear.
'Midst all my woes I tell thee but the truth."

Alcinous thus answered him, and said:

"Stranger, it seems my child has not in this 375
Her duty minded; since she with her maids
Did not conduct thee to our house herself:
And she it was whom thou didst first intreat."

Wary Ulysses thus replied to him:

"O chief, chide not thy gentle child for this, 380
She ordered me to follow with her maids;
But I would not; I doubted and I feared
Lest thou shouldst anger, seeing me with her:
We men are ever jealous on this earth."

Alcinous thus answered him and said: 385

"Stranger, I will not angry be for nought;
'Tis best that reason guide us in our acts :
If Father Jove, Apollo, and Minerva,
Would only grant that thou such as thou art,
With the same noble thoughts as I, wouldst stay 390
And win my child, and be my son-in-law :
For I would give thee home and heritage,
If thou wouldst willingly remain with us.
But no Phæacian shall detain thee here
Against thy will; forbid this Father Jove : 395
And I an escort will assign to thee,
As by to-morrow thou thyself shalt know :
And while thou art reposing, slumber-locked,
Thou shalt be sailing o'er a tranquil sea,
Until thou reach thy country and thy home ; 400
Though it be further than Eubœa's isle,
Which all our people who have seen it say
To be the furthest land : from whence they brought
Brown Rhadamanthus, when he visited
The giant Tityus, who from Gæa sprang. 405
From thence they sailed, and on the self-same day
Their homeward voyage they finished without toil.

And thou thyself shalt by experience know
How swift my ships, how skilful are my men,
To stir the salt sea water with the oar." 410

He spoke; Ulysses who had much endured
Rejoiced, and uttered in these words his prayer:
"O Father Jove, allow Alcinous
All to perform which now he promises:
So he on the rejoicing earth may win 415
Immortal honour, I my native land."

As thus with one another they conversed,
The lily-armed Arête ordered then
The serving maidens straightway to prepare
And place a couch beneath the corridor, 420
With goodly purple cushions piled thereon,
With carpets decked, and blankets of soft wool:
They left the hall with torches in their hands.
When they with care the couch had ready made,
They called Ulysses with these words, and said: 425
"O stranger, hasten now to take thy rest,
Thy couch is ready and prepared for thee."

They spoke, and welcome seemed his rest to him.
So thus Ulysses who had much endured,

Slept on the well-carved bed beneath the porch : 430

And in an inner room Alcinous,

Reposed within his palace' lofty walls ;

His queen and consort there his couch prepared.

BOOK VIII



ARGUMENT.

Council of Phæacians — Banquet and games — Songs of Demodocus.

DAY 35.

AND when the rosy-fingered dawn arose
Born of the early morning, from his couch
Sprang forth Alcinous, of might divine ;
Ulysses also rose, the noble chief
Who cities and their strongholds had o'erthrown. 5
Alcinous led him to the market-place
Close by the ships of the Phæacians ;
And there they sat together on the stones
Of polished marble ; meanwhile Pallas went
Throughout the city, in the shape and mien 10
Of King Alcinous' herald, counselling,
To give Ulysses escort to his home :

To every chief she went, and said these words:

“Ye lords and chiefs of the Phæacians,

Come to the council, that ye see and hear 15

The stranger guest, who now has just arrived

At King Alcinous’ palace o’er the sea,

In beauty like one of the immortal gods.”

Thus with these words the minds of all she stirred;

The courts and seats were quickly thronged with men

Assembling: many wondered as they gazed, 21

And saw Laertes’ son, renowned in war.

And o’er his head and shoulders Pallas shed

A wondrous grace; and added to his form

Unusual grandeur, and new majesty; 25

That he should earn from the Phæacians

Their favor, with respect and reverence;

And that he might come off successfully

In contests, if they put him to the proof.

And when they gathered and assembled were, 30

Alcinous addressed them with these words:

“Ye lords and chiefs of the Phæacians,

List that ye hear the words I crave to say:

This stranger has arrived at my abode,

A wanderer; I know not who he be, 35
Or if his dwelling be in East or West;
And begs of us safe conduct to his home:
Now let us grant him this without delay,
As we are wont to do; for no one yet
Has ever visited my palace here, 40
And has been long detained against his will
In sadness, without escort to his home.
So let us launch at once a black-hulled ship,
A new and swift one, in the sea divine;
And two and fifty youths choose for a crew, 45
From all our people, the most skilled we have;
And let them in the rowlock lash the oars;
Then disembark and to my palace wend,
And there prepare at once a hasty meal,
Which I will give to all right willingly; 50
These are my orders to the youthful crew.
Ye others, sceptre-bearing chieftains all,
Come to my palace, that we may regale
This stranger in my halls; let none refuse.
And summon too the godlike minstrel here, 55
Demodocus, to whom surpassing all

The god has given the witching gift of song,
Whatever be the subject of his lay."

He spoke, and led the way; the sceptred chiefs
Followed, the herald sought the god-like bard. 60
And as he ordered, two and fifty youths
Went to the margin of the barren sea;
And when they reached the ship and waterside,
They launched the black hull in the water deep,
And placed at once on board the masts and sails; 65
The oars they fitted in the leathern thongs,
The white sails loosed, and all their gear prepared:
Next in deep water from the lofty beach
They safely moored the ship; and then they sought
The stately palace of Alcinous. 70

The chambers and the courts and corridors
Were filled with thronging men—both young and old
For them Alcinous made a sacrifice,
Twelve sheep, of heavy-footed oxen twain,
Eight boars with gleaming tusks; all these they flayed,
And ready made for the abundant feast.

The herald led the honored minstrel in,
Whom the Muse loved, and gave both good and ill:

For she had him of sight bereft, but given
The meed of poesy, and dulcet song. 80

Pontonous placed him on a gorgeous seat,
Against a springing column, 'midst the guests;
And hung his clear-tuned harp upon a pin
Above his head, and showed him where it hung :
A table and a basket fair with bread 85

He placed too by his side ; and at his hand
A cup of wine, that he might drink at will.

They on the ready viands laid their hands ;
When thirst and hunger both were satisfied,
The Muse the minstrel urged to celebrate 90
The praise of heroes, in that wondrous lay
Whose fame has echoed through the heaven wide :

He sang Ulysses' strife with Peleus' son,
How when a sacred festival they held,
With haughty words their quarrel there begun : 95
This Agamemnon king of men beheld,
And at their strife with joy his bosom swelled ;
Because he hoped the war might then be ended,
Since the two bravest of the Greeks in wrath
contended.

This was the token given by the god, 100
Even by Apollo, from his holy shrine;
When the chief o'er its stony threshold trod,
To question him in Pytho the divine;
These warriors' strife of conquest was the sign :
Thus by the will of Jove, the first dark woe, 105
Hung o'er the doom'd heads of Greek and Trojan foe.

Thus sang the famous minstrel, but the chief
Seized with his stalwart hands his purple robe
And drew it o'er his head, and hid his face;
He shamed that they should see him shedding tears :
But when the godlike minstrel ceased to sing, 111
He wiped his eyes, and drew aside his robe;
And taking up the double handled cup
He poured libations to the gods above.
But when the chiefs of the Phæacians 115
The minstrel urged to recommence his lay, >
Because they were delighted with his words,
Ulysses hid his face again and wept.
None of the others saw him shedding tears;
Alcinous alone perceived his grief, 120
And sitting next him heard his heavy sighs :

Whereat he with these words at once addressed
The skilful oarsmen, the Phæacians.

“Ye lords and chiefs of the Phæacians,
We now have all enjoyed our common feast, 125
And listened to the harp, whose strains so well
Accompany the bounteous festival:
Now let us quit the hall, and prove our skill
In warlike games; that when he reach his home
Our guest may tell his friends how we excel 130
In wrestling, and in boxing with the fist,
And with swift feet to vault, and run the course.”

He said, and led the way; they followed him:
The herald hung the harp upon the pin
And from the hall led out Demodocus; 135
Along the path which the Phæacian chiefs
Were taking then to view the warlike games,
Towards the market-place they bent their steps,
A mighty crowd in thousands followed them:
And many gallant youths assembled there; 140
Acronæus and Ocyalus stood forth;
Elatreus, Nautus, and Anchialus,
Prymnus, Eretmus, Pontus, Prorus too;

Thoos and Anabésineus stood there ;
And Polynéus' son from Tecton sprung, 145
Amphialus ; and strong as cruel Mars,
Euryalus ; there was Naubolides,
Who save the noble youth Laodamas,
In beauty and in figure far excelled
All other youths of the Phæacians : 150
And the three sons of King Alcinous,
Laodamas and Halius, the third
Was Clytonéus, rival of the gods.
And first they in the foot race tried their speed,
For them the course was measured from the goal ; 155
In clouds of dust across the plain they flew ;
And Clytonéus proved most swift of foot :
Far as a yoke of mules would leave behind
A team of oxen, ploughing the furrow down,
So far he left the others in the race, 160
When to the goal and people he returned.
In toilsome wrestling next they tried their strength,
In this Euryalus surpassed the rest ;
In leaping, all Amphialus excelled ;
Elatreus was the strongest with the quoit ; 165

Laodamas in boxing won the prize,

The gallant son of King Alcinous.

Thus they enjoyed the games and rivalry,

When them the youth Laodamas addressed :

“ Friends, let us ask our guest if he perchance 170

May skill possess in any manly feats :

His stature and his figure are not mean ;

His thighs, his knees, and hands, and stalwart neck,

Betoken strength ; nor does he want for youth,

Although worn down by many sufferings ; 175

For well I ween nought saps the strength of man

More surely, than long hardship on the deep ;

However strong and stout of heart he be.”

Euryalus thus answered in reply :

“ Laodamas, thy words are true and just ; 180

Address him now thyself, and challenge him.”

The noble youth soon as he heard these words

Stepped forth, and thus Ulysses he addressed :

“ Wilt thou too, noble stranger, take thy part

In rivalry with us ? perchance it be 185

That thou hast skill in manly exercise :

And for a man as long as life remains,

There is no greater honor than the skill
With which he exercises hand and limb.
Come strive with us, and banish all thy care: 190
Thy homeward journey is not far removed,
Thy ship is launched, and ready are thy crew."

Ready Ulysses answered in reply :

"Laodamas, O why importune me?
My soul is troubled now with other cares, 195
Nor can I think of feats of manly strength :
For I have many, many, ills endured ;
And now I sit in thy assembly here
Yearning for home ; for this alone I pray
The favor of thy king, and people all." 200

Euryalus with sneering speech rejoined :

"Stranger, I see thou art no hero, skilled
In manly exercises, fit for men ;
More like a voyager in a huckster ship,
A chief of men who sail for merchandise ; 205
Who thinks of nought but cargo, and his goods
Acquired with churlish greed : no champion thou !"

With frowning glance Ulysses thus replied :

"Foul is thy speech, and arrogant art thou :

The gods give not their choicest gifts to all, 210
Beauty of form, wisdom and eloquence :
For one perhaps of mean exterior
The gods adorn with beauty in his speech ;
And in delight all hang upon his glance,
With winning modesty his flowing words 215
He utters, all excelling in debate ;
And in the city when he shows himself,
The people all regard him as a god.
Another has the beauty of a god
But lacks the crowning grace of eloquence. 220
With beauty thus the gods distinguish thee,
But have withheld from thee their other gifts ;
For thou art vain in judgement and in sense,
And thou hast stirred my anger in my breast
By thy ill-mannered words : in warlike feats 225
I am not quite unversed as thou hast said ;
But ever 'midst the foremost I was found,
When I had confidence in youth and strength :
Now I am bound in misery and woe ;
Much have I suffered,—many ills endured 230
In strife with men and with the cruel waves :

But toil-worn though I be, I will abide
The contest; for thy speech my spirit chafes,
Thy gibing words provoke and anger me."

He spoke, nor even laid aside his robe, 235
But forward sprang and seized a massive quoit,
Heavier by far than the Phæacians used;
And hurled it spinning from his sinewy hand:
Hurtled the flying stone; and to the earth
Crouched down those sailors, the Phæacians, 240
As it hissed o'er their heads; afar it flew
Beyond the utmost mark, as from his hand
It ran its whirling course; Minerva stood
In likeness of a man to mark the goal;
And thus with kindly words she spoke to him. 245
"A blind man, fumbling, by the touch could mark
The goal for thee O stranger; for thy quoit
Lies not among the ruck, but far beyond:
Thou may'st have confidence to win; none else
Will equal, certes none surpass thy cast." 250

Thus said she,—and the godlike chief rejoiced
To find he had a friendly comrade nigh,
Amidst the contest; and with lighter cheer

He spoke, addressing the Phæacians :

“Try to read this, ye youths, and afterwards 255

I will make yet a further cast than this :

And let him now step forth among you all

Who has the courage and the heart to strive

With me ; for ye have vexed me with your gibes ;

Be it to box, to wrestle, or to run, 260

I will not baulk the wish of one of you,

Phæacians all ; except Laodamas ;

He is my host, how can I fight with him

Who now affords me hospitality ?

Senseless and worthless would I hold the man 265

Who on a foreign soil would challenge him

To strife, who entertains him as a guest :

’Twould be as if to fight against himself.

But of you others none will I deny,

But try the contest with you face to face : 270

I am not altogether worthless now

For warlike feats in rivalry with men ;

I handle yet with skill the polished bow,

And in the hostile ranks I could pick out

And shoot my man the first ; though round me stood

My comrades eager all to smite the foe. 276
And Philoctetes only me excelled
In archery, among the Greeks at Troy,
Whene'er we shot; save him I am the first
Of all who now are living on the earth: 280
But with the heroes of the days of yore
I do not claim to vie; with Hercules,
Or with Œchalian Eurytus; who strove
Even with the gods for skill in archery:
And for this cause, the mighty Eurytus 285
Perished before his time, nor reached old age;
In anger him the god Apollo slew,
Because the mortal dared to challenge him.
And far as one of you the arrow shoot,
Will I the javelin hurl, and reach the mark. 290
But in the foot race only do I fear
That one of you Phæacians pass me by;
For I am sorely jaded by the waves;
And on my voyage I lacked both care and food:
Therefore my limbs are weakened and unstrung." 295
He spoke, and at his words they silence held,
Alcinous alone addressed him thus:

“Stranger, thy words give no offence to us;
’Tis just that thou the valour wish to show,
Which thee adorns; and that thou anger feel 300
With him who with harsh words has challenged thee:
For no one who has wit to speak with sense
Would on thy prowess dare to cast a doubt.
But heed my words, and tell thy hero friends;
And when thou holdest banquet in thy halls 305
In peace at home, thy wife and children round,
Think of the wondrous skill which we possess,
Which from our fathers Jove has given to us.
In wrestling, and in boxing with the fist
We are not foremost; but unrivalled are 310
To run a race on foot, or sail a ship:
The feast, the harp, the dance are dear to us,
And frequent change of garments rich and rare,
Warm and luxurious baths, and couches soft.
And now Phæacian dancers, step ye forth, 315
And dance your best before this stranger here;
That he to all his friends may tell at home
How much in seamanship we all surpass,
And in the race, the dance, and minstrelsy.

.

And some one fetch now for Demodocus 320

The tuneful harp which hangs up in my hall."

Thus spake Alcinous: the herald rose

And from his palace fetched the graceful harp:

And umpires nine, whose duty ever was

To measure out the lists for games of skill, 325

Prepared a level flooring for the dance;

A broad and goodly stage they ready made:

The herald with the shrill-toned harp approached,

And straightway gave it to Demodocus:

He came forth in their midst, and round him stood 330

The skilful dancers in the bloom of youth,

And to the measured dance their feet beat time;

Ulysses gazed with wonder as he watched

The glancing of the many twinkling feet.

The harper swept the strings, and straight began 335

His song melodious; all about the loves

Of Mars with coronetted Aphrodite;

"How first in Vulcan's palace, secretly

They met; and many gifts he gave to her,

And brought dishonour on the marriage bed 340

Of him her Lord: to whom the sun god came

The witness of their loves, and told him all.
And Vulcan when he heard the grievous tale
Went to his smithy, brooding evil thoughts :
He placed the mighty anvil on its seat, 345
And fetters forged on it, infrangible,
Inextricable ; ever fast to hold.
And when the gyves were finished and complete,
Incensed with Mars he to his chamber went :
There stood the couch that was so dear to him, 350
And in a circle on its posts he spread
The cunning snare ; and from the high roof tree
Unnumbered as the spider's æry web
The threads were hung ; invisible to all,
Even to the gods, so weirdly were they made. 355
“ And when the springe was laid thus craftily
He feigned to go to Lemnos' well-built keep,
Which was the dearest land of all to him.
Mars of the golden reins not unawares,
Kept watch on this ; and soon was he informed 360
Vulcan, the mighty smith, had gone from home.
To Vulcan's palace straight he bent his steps,
Pining for Cytheræa's love, who wore

The graceful garland wreath'd in her hair ;
She from her mighty father, Saturn's son, 365
Had even now returned ; and sat her down,
He sought her in her home as she returned,
And seized her hand, and said these tender words :
' Come sweet with me, let us enjoy our loves ;
Vulcan is far from home, and now has gone 370
To Lemnos, and the harsh tongued Sintians.'
Thus spake the god ;—and she was nothing loth,
And to the couch they turned, and lay them down.
There they were caught in crafty Vulcan's snare,
Which held them fast, nor could they stir a limb, 375
At once they saw for them was no escape.

“ The mighty *Lame* one was not far away ;
The sun-god was his spy, and told him all ;
And vexed at heart he sought his house again :
Before his gates he stood with anger wild, 380
And loud he shouted, summoning the gods :
' O father Jove, and all ye other gods
Who live in endless bliss, come here and see
A shameless deed, which will your laughter move ;
For me, who am the *Lame* one, ever scorns 385

Jove's daughter, Aphrodite; and still she loves
Infernal Mars; because he has the gift
Of beauty, and has symmetry of limb;
And I was weakly from my birth; alas!
For this my parents are to blame, not I; 390
Would that I never had been born to them!
And ye will see them lying on my couch;
To see them there costs me a bitter pang:
But there henceforth they will not wish to lie,
Full well I ween; however loving they 395
Nor will they wish to rest long where they are;
But in these gyves and fetters shall they stay,
Until my father Jove restore to me
The marriage gifts, and portion which I gave
To her, the shameless woman; though his child 400
Beauty she has, but modesty she lacks.'

"He spoke and at his palace, brazen paved
The gods assembled; the Earth shaker came,
Neptune; and Hermes bringer of good luck;
Came Phoebus, lord of the unerring bow; 405
The goddesses for shame remained at home.

"The gods who blessings shower upon men

Before his threshold stood assembled all :
And ringing laughter 'midst the happy gods
Arose when they beheld the weird device 410
Of Vulcan, him so versed in cunning spells :
And looking at his neighbour one thus said :
'Ill speed, ill deed ; the slow o'ertakes the swift ;
Vulcan, the halting one, has captured Mars.
Though lame he be, he in his cunning spring 415
Has taken him who is most fleet of foot
Of all the gods ; sin earns its just award.'

"As thus with one another they conversed,
Apollo, son of Jove, to Hermes said :
'O Hermes, son of Jove, Giver and Guide, 420
Wouldst thou of thy free will be fettered thus,
To win the love of golden Aphrodite?'

"The guiding Argus slayer answered thus :
'Apollo, Lord of the unerring bow,
I would indeed that this might be my luck ! 425
Then might the fetters three times stronger be,
And all the goddesses be lookers on
As well as ye,—so I might win the love
And lie beside the golden Aphrodite!'

“He spoke and moved the laughter of the gods;
Neptune laughed not, but earnestly besought 431
Vulcan the wondrous smith to set Mars free;
And thus addressed him with these wingèd words:

‘Release him, and I promise thee for him.
All thou so justly claimest shall be paid, 435
In presence of the immortal gods themselves.’

“The wondrous Lame one thus replied to him:
‘Earth circling Neptune, ask not this of me,
Vile are the pledges which the vile can give:
How could I fetter thee among the gods 440
If Mars escaped from bonds and debt together?’

“Neptune, who shakes the solid earth replied:
‘Vulcan, if Mars escaping bonds and debt
Refuse to pay, myself will pay for him.’

“The wondrous Lame one answered in reply: 445
‘’Tis not for me to gainsay such a speech.’

“Then mighty Vulcan lifted up the springe,
And from the bonds which held them both so fast,
They both were freed; he bounded off to Thrace,
And she, the laughter loving Aphrodite 450
To Paphos fled, in Cyprus’ isle; where are

Her grove and altar, breathing frankincense :
And there the Graces bathed and tended her,
Anointing her with oil ambrosial,
Such oil as only the immortals use ; 455
And clad in garments lovely, wonderful."

Thus sang the famous minstrel, and the chief
Was charmed at hearing him, as were they all,
Those hardy sailors, the Phæacians.

Then to Laodamas and Halius 460
Alcinous directions gave to dance,
Those two alone ; since none could vie with them.
They in their hands took the round purple ball,
Which Polybus so deftly made for them ;
One bending backwards hurled it towards the clouds,
The other springing high to reach the ball, 466
Adroitly caught it in mid air ; before
He with his feet had touched the ground again.
When with the flying ball thus upwards thrown,
They had shown forth their skill sufficiently. 470
They danced together on the teeming earth,
Each changing place with each ; the other youths
Stood round the stage, and clapping beat the time

Loud was the echo of the stamping feet.

Ulysses then addressed Alcinous : 475

"Most mighty Lord the King, Alcinous,
Well didst thou boast thy dancers were the best ;
They prove thy words ; I marvel them to see."

Alcinous was pleased to hear his speech,
And the Phæacian oarsmen thus addressed : 480

"Hearken to me, Phæacian chiefs and lords,
This stranger seems to be a man of sense ;
'Tis therefore right that with a kindly gift
We him should honour, each of us and all :
Twelve noble chiefs there are who bear the rule 485

Among my people, the thirteenth am I ;

And now let each of us present to him

A mantle fair, and tunic ; and besides

Add we thereto a talent of fine gold :

And let us bring these out to him at once, 490

That he our guest may come and feast with us

In cheerful mood, and not with empty hands.

And let Euryalus apologise

To him our guest, and add thereto a gift ;

For certainly not seemly was his speech." 495

He spoke, they all applauded and approved;
A herald each sent forth to bring the gifts:
Also Euryalus in answer spoke:

“Most mighty Lord the King, Alcinous,
Right willingly will I apologise 500
To this our stranger guest at thy command;
And I moreover will present to him
This sword of solid bronze, with silver hilt:
The sheath which holds it is of ivory,
Fresh from the workman’s hands; a gift of price.” 505

Thus said he, as he placed within his hands
The sword with silver ornaments adorned;
And thus addressed him with these winged words:
“Hail honoured guest, if any word of mine
Have given thee offence, may the swift winds 510
Bear it afar; and the gods grant to thee
Again to see thy wife and native shore:
Much hast thou suffered far away from friends.”

Prudent Ulysses answered in reply;
“And thou kind host most kindly do I greet; 515
And may the gods vouchsafe thee happiness:
As to the sword which thou hast given to me

With many friendly words; henceforth I pray
That thou may'st never feel the need of it."

He spoke, and o'er his shoulders hung the sword:
The sun was setting as the gifts were brought
All by the heralds to Alcinous;
And the king's sons received the splendid gifts,
And laid them at their honoured mother's feet:
Alcinous the King directed all. 525

When afterwards they sat in pomp around,
Alcinous, Arête thus addressed:

"O Lady wilt thou order forth to bring
A chest, a splendid one, the best we have,
And in it place the tunic and fair robe: 530
And round the brazen cauldron let them kindle
A fire to warm the water for the bath.
That when our guest is with a bath refreshed
The presents he may see all safely stored,
Which we Phæacians have bestowed on him; 535
And then enjoy the feast and minstrel's song.
And I present to him this cup, my own,
Of gold, embossed, of wondrous workmanship;
That he may all his days remember me,

When he libations offers in his halls 540
To father Jove and all the other gods."

He spoke, Arête told her serving maids
At once to place the tripod on the fire ;
They placed the brazier on the glowing blaze,
And water poured therein ; and underneath 545
They heaped the wood upon the kindled brand ;
And round the belly of the tripod licked
The flame ; the water bubbled with the heat.

Meanwhile Arête from her chamber brought
A splendid coffer for her stranger guest ; 550
And placed within it all the beauteous gifts,
Garments and gold, which the Phæacians gave,
The tunic also and the gorgeous robe :
She then addressed him with these winged words :
" Here is the cover, and about it cast 555
Deftly, a binding cord to fasten it,
So that thou be not robbed upon thy voyage,
While sleeping sweetly in the black hulled ship."

And when the godlike chief had heard her speech,
He closed the cover straight, and round it cast 560
A fastening, in many artful coils,

With a device which Circe taught to him.

The stewardess invited him to bathe,
Straight to the bath he went, and joyed to find
The tepid water and the gentle care, 565
To which he had so long a stranger been,
Since he had left the fair Calypso's halls;
Where he was ever tended 'like a god.

The maidens him attended at the bath,
With olive oil anointed, and around 570
His limbs, a tunic and rich mantle-cast;
And from the bath he went amidst the chiefs
Who quaffed their wine; and there Nausicaa
Close by the threshold of the gorgeous hall
Stood like a goddess in her loveliness: 575

She gazed in admiration at the chief,
And thus addressed him with these winged words:
"Hail stranger; sometimes in thy native land
Call me to mind; and call to mind the debt
Thou owest first of all to me, thy life." 580

To her the prudent chief in answer spoke:
"O daughter of Alcinous the King,
Nausicaa, may Jove vouchsafe to grant,

The Lord of Juno who the thunder wields,
That I may see the day of home return ; 585
And safely reach again once more my home ;
There as a goddess will I pray to thee
Each day, for thou hast saved my life, sweet
maid."

He spoke, and took his seat beside the king.
They served the banquet and prepared the wine ; 590
The herald led the cherished minstrel near,
Demodocus, by all in honour held ;
He brought him in amongst the revellers,
And by a lofty column placed his seat.
Ulysses then the herald thus addressed, 595
As from the chine of the white toothed boar
A portion he cut off, with fat enriched,
An ampler portion still was left for him :
"Herald, I pray thee give Demodocus,
For his repast this portion ; him I greet 600
With warm regard, though sorrowing myself :
For minstrels claim both honour and respect,
From all mankind who dwell upon the earth ;
For them the Muse has taught the wondrous spell

Of song; and dearly does she love them all." 605

He spoke, the herald to Demodocus

The portion bore, and placed it in his hands;

Their hands all on the ready viands laid;

When thirst and hunger both were satisfied,

Ulysses to Demodocus thus spoke: 610

"Demodocus, among all mortal men

I honour thee the first; for thee the Muse

Daughter of Jove has taught; or Phœbus' self:

With wondrous skill thou tellest of the woe

Which the Greeks caused, and they endured

themselves; 615

As if thou hadst thyself been present there,

Or from another thou the tale hadst heard.

But change thy strain, and tell about the horse

Of giant timbers which Epeius built,

Aided by Pallas; how Ulysses brought 620

This hollow ambush to the citadel

With heroes filled; who ravaged Ilium.

If thou canst tell this tale as it befell,

I will to all declare in very deed

A god has gifted thee with Poesy." 625

He spake; the minstrel felt the flame divine,
And thus broke forth in tuneful melody:

His song began with how the Argive host
Embarked on board their ships and sailed away,
And left their tents in flames upon the coast, 630
And left the gallant few who chose to stay
With famed Ulysses; who in war's array
Sat in the horse, within the city's bound;
The while the Trojan foe in council sat around.

For they themselves within their citadel 635
Had dragged the horse; and there the ambush stood;
And then on their debates confusion fell;
For threefold counsel brought incertitude;
Whether with axe to rend the hollow wood,
Or hurl it headlong from the rocky steep, 640
Or as an offering to the gods, the charmed spell to
keep.

They chose the last, for ruin was their doom;
When once the city in its walls concealed
The giant horse, within whose fatal womb

Of Argive chiefs the bravest in the field, 645
Sat ready armed with sword, and spear, and shield,
To issue forth; and on the Trojan foe
To wreak in their fell swoop, destruction, death, and woe.

And then he sang how like an angry tide
The Grecian heroes burst from out their lair, 650
And streaming forth from its gigantic side,
Enwreathed in fire and flame the city fair;
And then he sang how the heroic pair,
Ulysses joined with Menelaus, sought
The palace of Deiphobus; and there 655
Like gods of war a mighty combat fought,
And by Minerva's aid, ravage and ruin wrought.

Thus sang the famous minstrel, but the chief
Wept bitterly; the tears ran down his cheeks:
Thus lies the woman at her husband's feet. 660
Weeping for him the loved one, who has fallen
For her his city, and his country's cause;
Striving from home, and from his children dear
To turn aside the fate, and fated day.

She sees him dying, gasping out his life, 665
And shrieks embracing him; they with their spears
Behind her, urge her on with cruel blows
On back and shoulders into slavery;
To suffer misery and toil; her cheeks
Are wasted with her miserable woe. 670

Thus from Ulysses' eyebrows fell the tears,
From all the others he concealed his tears;
Alcinous alone perceived his grief,
And sitting near him heard his heavy sighs:
And seeing this, he with these words addressed 675
Those skilful oarsmen, the Phæacians:
"Ye lords and chiefs of the Phæacians,
Hearken to me; let now Demodocus
Lay by his tuneful harp, and still his song;
Its burden is not pleasing to us all; 680
For since our feast was ended, and his lay
Began the godlike minstrel, this our guest
Has never ceased from shedding bitter tears;
A bitter grief indeed must wring his soul!
So let him still his song that we may all, 685
Our guest, and we the hosts rejoice together,

'Tis better so, for all is done for him,
Our honored guest; for him we now prepare
Escort and gifts, which willingly we grant.
For like a brother must the stranger be, 690
Who comes in sore distress; aye e'en to him
Who has but little pity in his breast.

“And thou no longer shroud in deep reserve
What I demand of thee; 'tis best to tell.
Say now the name by which thou hast been called,
There far away, where'er thy dwelling be, 696
By father, mother, and thy countrymen.
For no man, be he noble, be he mean,
Is nameless quite among his fellow-men
Since he first drew his breath; a name to all 700
Is given by their parents at their birth.
And tell thy land, thy people, and thy home,
So that our ships may find the course to steer;
For unlike others, our Phæacian ships
Need neither helm nor pilot them to guide; 705
But sense they have, and will, as were they men;
And know the cities and the fruitful lands
Of all the human race; and the vast deep

They traverse swiftly, though they shrouded be
In darkness and in mist; no fear in them 710
To suffer loss or wreck upon the sea.
But long ago, I heard my father say,
Nausithous, that Neptune jealous was,
For that we were safe guides to every one;
So he would wreck one of our gallant ships 715
Some day, returning o'er the shadowy sea;
And near our city would a mountain raise
O'erhanging it: thus spoke the aged king:
And may the god accomplish all these things,
Or leave them unaccomplished; as he will! 720
“But tell me now in truth whence hast thou sailed?
What countries hast thou visited of men,
What peopled cities? Their inhabitants
Say, didst thou find them lawless, savage, wild,
Or kind to strangers, did they fear the gods? 725
Say why thou weepest, and dost grieve thy soul
When thou dost hear the sufferings of the Greeks,
And of the doom of Troy? which the gods willed,
And fated this destruction for mankind;
That it might point a tale for future times. 730

Has any gallant kinsman of thine own
Perished before the walls of Ilium ?
A son-in-law, or father of thy wife,
The dearest after thine own blood and race ?
Or any comrade brave, thy bosom friend ? 735
For e'en a brother cannot dearer be
Than the tried friend of wise and upright mind."

BOOK IX.

ARGUMENT.

**Ulysses declares his name—His tale—The Cicones—The
Lotophagi—The Cyclops.**

DAY 35.

ULYSSES ready of resource replied:

"Most mighty lord the king, Alcinous,
 'Tis well to listen to the minstrel's lay,
 A minstrel worthy to the gods to sing:
 Nothing more grateful do I know than this,
 When festive joy o'er all the people reigns,
 Who seated side by side enjoy good cheer,
 And listen to the minstrel in the hall:
 With bread and viands are the tables piled,
 And from the bowl the busy cup-bearer
 Pours in the goblets forth the luscious wine:

This of all pastimes seems to me the best.
Thou hast a wish to hear the grievous woes
Which I have suffered; that recalling them
I may renew my grief, and weep again! 15
What first, what last shall I relate, of all
The many woes the gods have thrust on me?
First I will tell my name, that ye may know
Who I may be, a fugitive in woe.
Who am your guest; whose dwelling is afar. 20
I am Ulysses, of Laertes son;
And I am held to be most skilled of men
In stratagem; my fame to heaven extends.
In sunny Ithaca my dwelling is,
O'er which Mount Neritus its head uprears 25
Crested with rustling leaves; and there around
Nestled together many islands lie,
Dulichium, Samé, and Zacynthus green;
The isle itself is furthest o'er the sea,
And slants down towards the west; the others turn, 30
And sun themselves towards the eastern ray:
Rugged it is, but nurtures gallant youths;
I ne'er can see a fairer land than this.

In vain Calypso, lovely goddess, strove
To keep me from it by her witcheries, 35
In her arched grotts ; striving to win my love ;
In vain Ææan Circe with her wiles
Kept me enthralled, striving to win my love ;
She never could enchain my will to hers :
For nought is sweeter than our native land, 40
Or dearer than our kindred ; fair though be
And rich our dwelling in a foreign land ;
Afar from home, our kindred, and our friends :
But I will now relate the woes which Jove
On me inflicted, on my way from Troy. 45

“The winds bore me from Troy to Ismarus,
Where the Cicónes dwell ; the city there
I burnt, and slew the men ; their wives and goods
We took, and shared the spoils of war to all ;
For none with me his share of booty lacked. 50
And thence I strongly urged upon my men
To sail, and with no lagging foot to flee :
Senseless they would not listen to my words,
But there upon the shore they deeply drank,
And sheep and lazy-footed oxen slew ; 55

While some Ciconians fled, and warning gave
To others of their race, who near them dwelt,
On the mainland; more numerous and brave;
Skilful to fight in chariots or on foot.
And by the misty dawn in hordes they came, 60
Thick as the leaves and buds are seen in spring;—
Then Jove decreed an evil fate for us
Devoted ones; that we should suffer loss.
In close array they fought beside our ships,
And from both sides the brazen spears were hurled:
From morn throughout the day we stood our ground
Right manfully; though they outnumbered us;
But when the sun sloped down towards the west,
And the tired ox is loosèd from his yoke,
Then the Ciconians forced the Greeks to yield. 70
Six of my gallant comrades in each ship
Were slain; the rest by flight escaped from death.

“Onward we sailed from thence with saddened hearts,
Our comrades lost, but glad to 'scape ourselves:
Not further did I let them urge the ships, 75
Which to the oar-stroke swung to either hand,
Till we had thrice invoked each one of those,

Our hapless comrades, we had left behind ;
Whom the Cicones slew upon the plain.
Then Jove, who piles the thunder clouds stirred up 80
In a fierce hurricane the northern wind,
Shrouded in driving mist the earth and sky,
And from the heavens night sent sweeping down.
Bows-under pitched the ships ; beneath the blast
The sails were torn and tattered ; in our fear 85
We lowered them down and stowed them in the holds :
And rowed the ships towards the land amain.
Two nights, two days together, we lay there,
Our souls worn out with weariness and grief
But when fair Dawn the third day ushered in, 90
We raised our masts and hoisted the white sails,
And sat ; the while the helmsman and the breeze
Kept the ships steady to their onward course.
Then had I safely reached my native shore,
But wave and current, and the northern wind, 95
Together beat me from my track away ;
As vain I strove to turn Maleia's cape ;
And further drove me past Cythera's isle.
“ For nine days thence I plied with baffling winds,

Across the deep, wherein the sea fish play ; 100
And on the tenth we touched upon the land
Of the Lotophagi, who feed on flowers :
We landed and drew water for our ships
And by their side my comrades took their meal.
When we were satisfied with food and drink, 105
I sent some of my comrades to enquire.
Who they might be who lived upon the land ;
And two I chose, a herald was the third.
And soon they met with the Lotophagi :
They on my comrades schemed no ill design 110
But offered them the lotus flower to eat.
Whoe'er may taste its fruit so honey sweet,
Will never wish to bring a message back,
Or to return ; but ever wish to dwell
With these Lotophagi ; and ever feed 115
On that weird plant, forgetful of his home.
But these I drove back weeping to their ships
Dragged them on board, and bound them in the
holds :
And to my other much loved comrades all
I gave command to go on board their ships 120

In haste ; lest they should of the lotus eat
And think no more of home, and home return.
Straight they embarked, and sat upon the thwarts
And with their oars they threshed the foaming sea.

“ And onward thence we sailed with saddened hearts
And reached the land wherein the Cyclops dwell ;
An arrogant and lawless race they are,
Who blindly on the immortal gods rely ;
Nor labour with their hands, nor plant nor sow :
Their lands unsown, untilled, all things produce ; 130
Barley and wheat ; for them the vineyards yield
Wine from the heavy clustered grape ; which Jove
Still nourishes with fruitful showers for them.
No councils do they know, nor law, nor right ;
But on the summits of the mountain tops, 135
They dwell in vaulted caves ; each one o’er rules
His household, wife, and children, as he will ;
Nor have they care for aught beside themselves.

“ A narrow island off a harbour lies
Not very distant from the Cyclops’ land, 140
Wood crowned ; there countless chamois roam at will,
No paths for human footsteps them to scare,

Nor do the hunters there resort, who toil
Amidst the brakes, and scale the mountain crags:
No grazing ground, no till'd land is there; 145
Unsown, unhusbanded, devoid of men
It food affords to the wild goats alone.
For ships with painted bows are never seen
Amidst the Cyclops; nor with them are found
Men who can build a ship, or who are skilled 150
In all the arts of fitting gallant ships,
Which visit cities far apart, and fetch
The merchandise and treasures manifold
For which men traverse in these barks the seas;
Then had the island not a desert been; 155
Not barren is it, but in season bears
All goodly crops; down stretching to the sea
Are water meadows, ever soft and moist;
Rich vines are there, and level ground for corn,
And heavy and unfailing is the yield 160
At reaping time; rich is the soil beneath.
Landlocked the harbour; there no need to moor
Or cast out anchor, or make fast the stern,
But beach the ship, and stay there as ye list

Until the favourable breezes blow. 165

And at the harbour's head there issues forth

A fount of sparkling water from the rock ;

Round it a fringe of poplars wave their heads.

Here under sail we came ; and sure some god

Directed us throughout the dusky night ; 170

Nought could we see, the air around the ships

Was dense with mist ; and overhead the moon

Enwrapped in clouds refused to give her light :

None saw the isle ; nor did we hear or see

The long swell rolling in upon the strand 175

Before we ran our gallant ships aground.

When we had beached our galleys on the sand,

We lowered the sails and went on shore ourselves ;

And on the margin of the sea we slept

The deep sleep of the weary until dawn. 180

“ And when the rosy-fingered Dawn appeared,

Born of the early prime, throughout the isle

We wandered ; and we gazed on all around :

And to afford us chance of food, the Nymphs

The daughters of the ægis-bearing Jove, 185

Aroused the chamois, on the mountains bred.

Straight from our ships we fetched our limber bows,
And pointed hunting spears: in parties three
The chace we ordered, and the quarry shot:
And game in plenty did the god provide: 190
Twelve ships were in my fleet, nine chamois each
Fell to their share; ten to myself alone.
All day we sat till sunset feasting these
On plenteous venison, and the luscious wine;
For in my ships as yet there was no lack 195
Of ruddy wine; for we had filled our jars
When the Cicones' stronghold we had sacked.
Not far from us we marked the Cyclops' land,
Their smoke, and bleating of their sheep and goats.
When the sun set and darkness fell around 200
We laid us down and slept upon the shore.
But when the rosy-fingered Dawn appeared
I called a council and addressed them all:
'My gallant comrades, you must here remain
While I go forth with my own ship and crew 205
To see what sort of men are dwelling here;
And whether they be lawless, savage, rude,
Or kind to strangers, reverence the gods.'

"Saying these words I went on board my ship,
Ordered my crew to follow, and cast off 210
The mooring hawsers; and they straight obeyed.
They took their seats in order on the thwarts,
And threshed the grey sea water with their oars.

"We soon drew near the place; and by the sea
Upon the furthest point of land we saw 215
A lofty cave with laurels shaded o'er
A folding place for many sheep and goats,
Within a lofty courtyard, which was built
With massive stones, firm bedded in the earth;
Girt with tall pines, and oaks, whose leafy crests 220
Waved high aloft; and he was sleeping there,
This man of giant bulk; who solitary
Was ever wont to tend his flock alone,
Nor with his fellows would associate,
But far from all imagined lawless thoughts. 225
For he was shaped more like a monster than
Aught human; like a shaggy peak he seemed
Uplifted o'er a lofty mountain range;
So showed this portent among other men.

"I ordered then my comrades to remain 230

Beside the ship, when beached upon the shore ;
And of their number twelve I took with me
The trustiest and best ; I also took
A goat-skin filled with dark red luscious wine ;
Which Maro gave to me, Evanthès' son, 235
Apollo's priest, who guarded Ismarus ;
We had protected him, his wife, and child,
With reverence ; and shielded them from harm :
In dread Apollo's leafy grove he dwelt,
And many splendid gifts bestowed on me. 240
He gave me seven talents of pure gold,
A bowl of solid silver, and besides
Twelve jars he drew for me of pure rich wine ;
A drink divine it was ; none knew of it
Of all the slaves and servants in his house ; 245
Only himself, his wife, and stewardess,
Knew where the wondrous liquor was concealed.
And when he drank it, luscious, ruby-red,
He mixed one goblet full with twenty more
Of water ; yet the odour from the bowl 250
Was marvellous, and scented all the air ;
None could refrain from quaffing such a draught.

“A mighty skin I filled and took with me
Of this same wine; and other viands too,
Packed in a wallet; my presaging thoughts 255
Warned me that I was then about to meet
A savage man, of superhuman strength,
With no respect for human laws or right.

“We shortly reached the cave, but could not find
Its occupant; he drove his flock afield, 260
We entered in and gazed about the cave;
Baskets were piled with cheeses all around,
The pens were thickly crammed with lambs and kids,
The various breeds of each were kept apart;
The firstlings by themselves, the summer lambs 265
Were all together, then those newly born:
The pans were all o’erflowing with skimmed milk,
And pails and jugs stood ready to be filled.
My comrades urged me then with eager words
To seize the cheeses first, and next to drive 270
The lambs and kids on board the gallant ships,
And sail away across the salt sea flood.
I yielded not to them; it better seemed
To see the man himself, and to request

He would afford us hospitality. 275
I little thought alas! how little joy
The sight of him would to my comrades bring!
 “A fire we kindled and an offering made
In reverence to the gods; then eagerly
We of the cheese partook ourselves; and then 280
We sat within, awaiting his return,
Until he came and homeward drove his flock.
He carried in a mighty load of wood
For fuel dried, to cook his evening meal,
And threw it clattering down within the cave. 285
We crouched into a corner in our fear;
And he within the cavern’s spacious bounds
Drove in his fatted ewes, and milked them all.
The males, both rams and goats he left outside,
Within the ample court; the cave he closed 290
Heaving a mass of rock against its mouth,
Vast; such as two-and-twenty four-wheeled trains
Of strongest build, could scarcely move away.
This craggy rock he placed to serve as door;
Then sitting down the ewes and bleating goats 295
He milked; and laid the kids to suck:

And then he curdled half the pearly milk,
And heaped it up in wicker baskets piled;
And half he poured out into pans to serve
For drink for him, and for his evening meal : 300
When all this work he finished thriftily,
The fire he kindled then, and looked about;
And seeing us addressed us with these words :
' Strangers who are ye ? o'er the watery waste
Whence have ye sailed ? arrive ye here by chance, 305
Or by design ? as corsairs on the sea
Risk ye your lives to plunder foreign lands ?'

" Thus said he, and our hearts within us sank,
Fearing his awful voice, and monstrous self ;
Still with these words I answered in reply : 310
' We Greeks are on our homeward way from Troy,
But driven o'er the gulf of the vast deep,
By baffling winds, out of our track and course,
Have hither come ; for Jove has willed it so.
And proud we are to be of those who own 315
The rule of Agamemnon, Atreus' son,
Whose fame is vaunted through the universe :
A mighty city he has overthrown

And sacked; and many warriors has destroyed.
And now we come to thee, and at thy knees 320
We supplicate thy hospitality,
And any other favour thou may'st grant,
And which as strangers we may justly claim.
O best and worthiest, respect the gods;
We are thy suppliants; protecting Jove 325
Avenger is of suppliants and guests,
And deems them worthy of his watchful care.'

 'I spoke, he answered from his ruthless soul:
'In truth O stranger witless must thou be,
Or from a very distant land hast come, 330
To warn me to respect and fear the gods:
For we, the Cyclops, have no care for Jove,
Who bears the ægis, nor the blessed gods;
For we ourselves are mightier far than they:
And I thy comrades would not spare, nor thee, 335
To 'scape the dreaded wrath of Jove himself,
Except I listed, of my own free will.
But tell me, whither hast thou brought thy ship?
Is she fast anchored by some distant shore,
Or is she near at hand? I fain would know.' 340

“His crafty questioning was not unmarked
By me; his craft I thus gave back to him:
‘Earth-shaking Neptune has destroyed my ship
And hurled her on the rocks which bound thy coast,
Driving her on a rugged promontory, 345
Whither the tempest swept us from the main;
And I with only these have ‘scaped grim death.’

“I spoke; he pitiless no answer gave;
But pounced upon my comrades; two of them
He seized as if they helpless puppies were, 350
And dashed them to the floor; with blood and brains
The earth was spattered; tore them limb from limb
And thus prepared them for his dread repast;
And as a lion on the mountains bred
He them devoured, nor left a scrap behind; 355
Flesh, entrails, bones, and marrow, all he ate:
We raised our hands to heaven, and wept to see
The fiendish deed; in utter helplessness:
And when the cannibal had filled his crop
With human flesh, he washed it down with milk, 360
Then stretched his mighty bulk and laid him down
Along the cavern floor, among his sheep:

And I with dauntless courage in my soul
Approached him, and my sword drew from my thigh
To smite him through the chest; and with my hand
I felt and searched his midriff, which concealed
His vitals; but on second thoughts I stayed:
For sheer destruction there awaited us;
Since never with our hands could we remove
The mighty rock which he had placed to guard 370
And block the lofty entrance of the cave:
So tearfully we waited for the dawn.

“And when the rosy-fingered Dawn appeared
He made a fire and milked his bleating ewes,
In order due, and laid the kids to suck, 375
And hastily he finished all his work.
And then two others did he seize of us
And slew, and made them ready for his meal:
And having made his horrible repast,
He drove his teeming flock from out the cave, 380
Opening with ease the mighty door; which straight
He closed, as if a quiver with its lid.
And then the Cyclops piping to his flock
Towards the mountain drove them; I was left

To my sad thoughts, how I might vengeance win. 385

And if Minerva would restore my fame ;

This to my mind appeared the wisest plan.

“A massive club was lying by the stall,

Of olive wood, yet green ; which for his use

The brute had cut and laid aside to dry : 390

To us it seemed to equal in its bulk

The mast of a stout, black-hulled merchant ship,

Of twenty oars ; well fit to cross the deep ;

Such was its length, so massive it appeared.

From this I cut myself a fathom's length 395

And gave it to my comrades ; telling them

To shape it with their knives, and make it smooth ;

And afterwards I cut it to a point,

And in the flaming fire I charred the end.

This I concealed beneath a heap of dung, 400

Of which was plenty strewed about the cave :

My comrades then I ordered to draw lots

For who should share the daring deed with me,

And help to lift the stake we had prepared,

And thrust and grind it in the Cyclops' eye, 405

When he was overcome by gentle sleep.

The lots they drew, and to the four it fell

I would have wished to choose; I made the fifth.

“He came at eve, tending his fleecy charge.

And all his teeming flock within the cave 410

He drove, and from suspicion and distrust,

Or by God’s will none left without the court:

He next swung in its place the mighty door,

And sitting down he milked his ewes and goats,

In order due, and laid the kids to suck: 415

When all his toil he thriftily despatched,

Two others of my comrades next he seized,

And having slaughtered made his meal of them.

“Then I drew near the Cyclops, in my hand

A bowl of dark red wine, and spoke to him: 420

‘See here O Cyclops, wine for thee to drink,

Since thou hast eaten human flesh for food,

Drink now, that thou may’st know what kind of cheer

Our ship contained; I bring this now to thee,

An offering that may move thy pity yet 425

To send me home; though thou dost wildly rage:

If thou so cruel art, and dost such deeds,

No human beings e’er will visit thee,

And bring with them such goodly gifts as this.'

"I said these words, he took the bowl from me 430

And drank it off; and the sweet luscious draught

Was wondrously delightful to his taste;

He asked me quickly for a second draught:

'Give me yet more, and let me know thy name,

That I may give thee hospitality: 435

For fruitful is the Cyclops' land, and bears

Wine from the heavy clustered grape, which Jove

Still nourishes with genial showers for us:

But this is nectar and ambrosia!'

"He spoke; and I poured out the sparkling wine

Thrice in his cup, and thrice he drained it off 441

With reckless folly; when the heady wine

Had worked its spell upon the Cyclops' brain,

I thus addressed him with these subtle words:

'Cyclops, thou askest me to tell my name, 445

And as thou askest I will tell it thee;

But thou must give me hospitality

As thou hast promised; No-one is my name,

And by the name of No-one I am known

By father, mother, and my comrades all.'

"I spoke; and thus his brutal thoughts found words:
'No-one, I promise I will eat thee last,
This is my promised hospitality.'

"And prostrate then he fell upon his back,
And stretched his brawny throat: all conquering sleep
Subdued him; from his filthy maw there oozed
Gobbets of human flesh and dribbling wine,
As snoring he belched forth its heavy fumes.
Among the burning embers then I placed
The stake till it was heated by the flame: 460
I also stirred my men with cheery words,
Lest any should shrink back from craven fear;
When in the flames the stake of olive wood
Though green, was ready to burst forth ablaze,
And reddened with the fire glowed wondrously, 465
I took it from the fire; around me stood
My comrades; and a godhead nerved their hearts:
They seized the stake, and thrust the sharpened point
Full in his eyeball; I above them stood,
And leaning hard against it screwed it round: 470

"Thus would the shipwright with an auger bore
A plank of wood; his helpmates from below

Work round on either hand the leathern strap,
Which fastened to the handle turns it round,
And keeps it ever spinning in its place: 475
Thus we turned round the stake with fiery point
Full in his eye; spouted the bubbling blood
Around the stake all burning as it was.
And as his eyeball burnt, the fiery breath
Shrivelled his eyelids and his brow; with heat 480
His deep-set eye-roots crackled as they burst.

“Thus may the smith in ice-cold water plunge
The huge axe-head, or adze, which hiss aloud,
To temper them, and give the metal strength;
Thus hissed his eye around the olive stake: 485
The rock re-echoed to his fearful howl,
And we in dread drew back; he from his eye
Tore out the stake defiled with blood and gore,
And threw it from him in his frantic pain;
And to his fellow Cyclops shouted loud, 490
Who had their dwellings round him; and abode
In caverns on the æry mountain peaks.
They when they heard his shouts, from far and near
Came running; and stood round about the cave

And asked what ailed him, what might be his
grief: 495

‘O Polyphemus, what is thy distress,
That thus thou criest through the ambrosial night?
Why dost thou fright us from our gentle sleep?
Has any mortal robbed thee of thy flocks,
Or injured thee by stratagem or force?’ 500

“And Polyphemus answered from the cave:
‘O comrades, No-one murders me by craft,
No mortal could by force me overcome.’

“Then they in answer spoke these winged words:
‘If no one does thee violence in aught 505
And thou art all alone; thy woes must come
From mighty Jove, from whom is no escape;
Pray to thy father Neptune for relief.’

“They spoke and went their way; within myself
I chuckled at the thought of how my name 510
And well-laid project had deceived them all.

“The Cyclops groaning in his agony,
Went fumbling with his hands, and moved away
The rock which formed the door; and sat him down
Right in the doorway, stretching out his hands 515

That he might seize on any one of us
Attempting to go out among the sheep :
So senseless did he deem that I should be.
But I thought deeply what were best to do,
To find some means to shun the threatened death,
Both for myself and comrades ; in my mind 521
I brooded every stratagem and plan
For very life ; a mighty ill was nigh.
And this appeared to me the wisest course :
His rams were fat, and heavy fleeces bore, 525
Well grown and large they were, and dark their wool :
In silence I bound these in threes together
With osier twigs, well twisted into bands,
On which the monstrous Cyclops used to sleep
And dream his lawless and revolting thoughts : 530
Under each middle one I bound a man,
On either side the others were a guard ;
And thus each three a comrade safely bore.
A ram, the very largest of the flock
I seized, and clinging to his back, I slipped 535
Under his fleecy belly, lying down ;
Twisting my hands into his woolly coat

I held on firmly; nor relaxed my grip.

“Sadly we waited thus till dawn of day;
And when the rosy-fingered Dawn appeared, 540
The males went out to feed as they were wont;
The ewes un milked were bleating in their pens,
Their udders full to bursting; racked with pain
Their master sat and felt the backs of all
As they passed by him; fool, he little knew 545
The burden bound beneath his fleecy sheep:
And last of all my ram went to the door
Bearing the burden of his wool,—and me,
With ready mind for aught that might occur.

“The mighty Polyphemus stroked the ram 550
With kindly action, and addressed him thus:
‘Why art thou last to issue from the cave
My gentle ram? it is not heretofore
Thy wont to be a laggard; ever first
Thou boundest forward, far beyond the rest; 555
The first to crop the flowers and tender grass,
The first to reach the rills and flowing streams,
And first to reach the homestead and return,
At eve; and now thou art the last of all!

Perhaps thou grievest for thy master's eye 560
Which that base caitiff No-one has destroyed,
Banded with his vile fellows; when with wine
They robbed him of his sense and consciousness:
This No-one, who has not yet 'scaped from me.
If thou hadst only sense and voice to tell 565
Where he is lurking now, to shun my wrath!
Oh! I would hurl him to the earth, and strew
The cavern with his brains: and I could bear
More lightly then this miserable woe
Which No-one, good for nought, has wrought on me.'

"He spoke, and let the ram go through the gate;
And when we had advanced a little space
Beyond the cave and courtyard, from the ram
I slipped away myself, and freed my men:
And then the active sheep so sleek with fat, 575
We drove in silence, keeping them together
Towards the ship; and glad our comrades were
To welcome us, who had escaped from death:
And they began to wail their comrades lost;
But this I checked; and by a sign I stayed 580
Their tears; and then in silence ordered them

Ulysses, who walled cities devastates, 625
Deprived me of my eyesight in his wrath ;
Laertes' son, who dwells in Ithaca.'

“I spake, he answered groaning in reply :
'Alas ! a prophecy I call to mind
Uttered of yore, which now comes home to me ; 630
A mighty man, a prophet, dwelt with us,
Named Telemus, the son of Eurymus,
Skilled in the knowledge of futurity ;
And who grew old in this our Cyclops' land,
And who foretold all that has come to pass ; 635
That I should suffer at Ulysses' hands
The loss of eyesight ; but I looked to see
The coming of a strong and mighty man,
Endued with superhuman power and strength :
And now this puny creature, vile and weak, 640
Has robbed me of my eye, o'ercome with wine !

“‘But now Ulysses come again to land
That I may give thee hospitality.
And I will ask the shaker of the earth,
To give thee guidance ; for his son am I ; 645
And he it is who boasts to be my sire ;

May he—no other god or mortal can,
Vouchsafe to heal me of my wretched woe !’

“ He spoke, and thus I answered in reply :
‘ Would I could reave thee of thy life and breath ! 650
And to the realm of Hades send thee down,
As surely as the god who shakes the earth
Will never give thy eyesight back to thee.’

“ I spoke, he prayed to Neptune, mighty lord,
Raising his hands towards the starry skies : 655

‘ O earth-encircling Neptune, hear my prayer,
Thou of the ebon locks ; if I am thine,
And thou indeed art proud to be my sire ;
May this Ulysses never reach his home,
Laertes’ son who dwells in Ithaca, 660
Who boasts of cities he has overthrown :
But if it be his fate to see his friends,
And reach his home secure, and native land ;
Let his return be late, and full of woe ;
His comrades lost, on board a foreign ship ; 665
And may he grief and sorrow find at home !’

“ He praying spoke, and Neptune heard his prayer.
Directly then he seized a larger rock,

And hurled it at us with tremendous force ;
Spinning it fell behind the dark-beaked ship, 670
Just short, and almost grazed the rudder end ;
The water seethed beneath the falling rock
And the wave rushing onward, drove the ship,
And swung her forward to the other shore.

“ And when we reached the island, there we found
Together all the other gallant ships ; 676
Around them our companions sat in grief ;
In constant sadness waiting our return.
And then we hauled our galley on the sand
And disembarked ourselves upon the shore : 680
From the ship's hold we brought to land the sheep ;
And them divided into equal shares,
For none with me his share of booty lacked.
My gallant comrades gave the ram to me,
When we the sheep divided : on the shore 685
I burned his haunches as a sacrifice
To Jove, who in the clouds of darkness dwells,
Son of the Ancient one, Omnipotent ;
But he regarded not my sacrifice ;
It was his will that all my gallant ships, 690

And all my cherished comrades should be lost!

“All day, till sunset, we sat feasting there
On plenteous viands, and on fragrant wine:
But when the sun went down, and darkness fell,
We took our rest, and slept upon the shore. 695

“And when the rosy-fingered Dawn appeared
Born of the early prime, I gave command
To my companions that they should embark
And straight cast off the stern-fasts from the shore:
They went on board and sat upon the thwarts 700
And with their oars they threshed the grey salt flood;
Onward we sailed from thence with saddened hearts,
Our comrades lost, but glad to 'scape ourselves.”

BOOK X.

ARGUMENT.

Tale of Ulysses—Æolus—The Læstrygonians—Circe and the
Isle of Æœa.

DAY 35.

“WE reached the island of Æolié;
There on this island, floating on the main
Dwells Æolus, the son of Hippotas,
Friend of the immortal gods; a wall of brass
Zones in the isle around, infrangible: 5
And sheer spring up its cliffs from out the sea.
“To him twelve children in his halls were born,
Six daughters, and six sons, in bloom of youth;
He gave his daughters to his sons as brides;
And ever 'neath their loving father's eye 10
And in their mother's watchful care, they live

A festive life; for them the daintiest cheer;
And every day with revelry and song
The perfumed hall resounds; and every night
The youths repose beside their modest brides 15
On couches quaintly carved, and tapestry soft.

“We reached the city and its fair abodes,
And a whole month he entertained me there,
And never wearied in his questioning
Of Troy, the Grecian fleet, and their return: 20
Of which I told him every circumstance.

And when I asked about my homeward voyage,
And begged his guidance he refused it not.
A hide flayed from an ox of growth mature
He gave to me in which he bound the course 25

Of all the stormy winds; for Saturn's son,
Had made him guard and warden of the winds,
To rouse them, and to calm them at his will.
And in my ship, with a bright silver cord
He bound them fast, that not a breath should 'scape; 30
Only a gentle zephyr he let loose,

A breeze, to waft us and our ships along.
But his good will was thwarted; we ourselves

By our own folly our own ruin wrought.

“Nine days and nights we sailed across the sea, 35
And on the tenth our native land appeared;
So near we were the watch fires e’en we saw
Fed by the herdsmen; just then gentle sleep
Me overcame, worn out with constant toil;
For all the voyage I took the helm myself, 40
Not trusting it to any of my crew,
That we might quickly reach our native shore.

“My comrades talked together as I slept
And gossiped of the silver and the gold
The presents which they thought I carried home 45
From Æolus, the son of Hippotas:
And one winked to his neighbour as he said:

“‘It is a marvel that where’er we go
Whatever be the city or the land
This man finds friends and honor everywhere: 50
For treasures rich he takes with him from Troy,
His booty; we go back with empty hands;
Though we the selfsame trials have undergone.
And now this Æolus has favored him
With gifts no doubt; but let us quickly see 55

What silver and what gold this bag contains.'

"Thus argued they, and evil counsel won;
They loosed the skin, and out flew all the winds!
A driving tempest whirled us out to sea
Far from our native land, in grief and tears: 60
And when I woke in my distracted mind
I doubted which were best, to end my woes,
And throw myself into the deep, and die,
Or bear with patience yet the ills of life.
I suffered and remained; and went below 65
And in my mantle hid my face for grief,
And laid me down: by the wild tempest's blast
My ships were driven off their course again,
Back to Æolié's isle, while wept my crew.

"We landed and drew water for the ships, 70
And by their side my comrades took their meal.
When we with food and drink were satisfied,
I with a herald and a chosen friend,
Went to the echoing halls of Æolus.

"I found him with his wife and children dear 75
Feasting as they were wont within the hall.
And as we reached the threshold, on the floor

We sat us down : in blank astonishment

They gazed, and thus addressed me with these words:

“ ‘ Whence hast thou come, Ulysses ? what foul fiend so
Afflicts thee now ? whom we with every care
Sent to thy native land, and to thy home,
Or wheresoe’er thou hadst the will to go ? ’

“ They spoke, and I in bitter grief replied :

‘ My wretched comrades by their own rash acts, 85
And sleep, which seized me in an evil hour,
Have caused this woe ; pity me, dear friends,
You only have the power to make amends.’

“ I pleaded thus my cause with gentle words ;
They silence kept ; their father thus replied : 90

“ ‘ Begone, most reprobate of living souls,
Forth from my isle ! for law and right forbid
That I should harbour here, or guide henceforth,
A man detested by the blessed gods.
Begone ! avaunt ! for thou hast reached our shore 95
Beneath the ban of the immortals’ hate.’

“ He thus dismissed me weeping from his halls.
Onward we sailed from thence with saddened hearts ;
The strength and courage of my crews were worn

By toilsome rowing ; in our vain pursuit 100
To find our way, with nought to guide our course.
Six days and nights we sailed with respite none ;
And on the seventh reached the lofty keep
Which Lamus built in Læstrygonia ;
Telepylus its name, with lofty gates. 105

“Here shouts the shepherd driving home his flock
To him who goes afield, who answers him ;
And there a man who sleep denied himself
Might earn a double wage ; for he might tend
The herds of kine, and flocks of milk-white sheep : 110
For there the outgoings of the morn and eve
Are near at hand, and on each other press.

“The haven then we entered, all around
Tall echoing cliffs sprang up on either side
In one unbroken wall ; and at its mouth 115
Two jutting promontories raise their peaks
Close opposite ; narrow the strait between.
Within the harbor they brought all the ships
Which to the oar-stroke swung to either hand,
And lashed them close together side by side 120
Within the land-locked basin of the cove :

Nor wave nor ripple stirred upon its face;

But all around it shimmered in repose.

“My black-hulled ship alone I kept outside

At the far point; and moored her to a rock. 125

I viewed the country from a rocky cliff,

No signs of labor done by man or beast,

Appeared to meet my view; we only saw

The distant smoke ascending from the earth.

I sent some of my comrades to enquire 130

Who they might be who lived upon that land:

Two men I chose, a herald made the third.

They found a level road, by which the wains

Brought wood down to the city from the hills;

And as the city they drew near, they met 135

A maiden fetching water in their way,

The comely daughter of Antiphates,

The Læstrygonian; she was wending towards

The limpid fountain of Artacia,

From which the water to the town was brought. 140

Approaching her, they questioned her, and asked

Who was the ruler of the people there;

She showed them where her father's palace was:

And as its echoing halls they entered in,
A woman met their view of giant bulk; 145
Tall as a mountain peak the monster seemed,
And horror seized them at the sight of her:
She from the council called Antiphates
Her Lord; who a sad fate prepared for them
For one of my companions straight he seized 150
And slew, to furnish food for his repast:
The other two escaped and reached the ships.

“Antiphates then raised a mighty shout
Throughout the city, and his people called:
The monstrous Læstrygonians hearing him 155
Came rushing forth in thousands at his call;
Like giants were they, not like mortal men.
They from the cliffs above cast down on us
Stones huge as rocks, which men could barely lift.
A mournful din arose among the ships 160
Of dying men, and ships together crushed:
Like fish they in the water speared my men
And bore them off to make their loathsome meal.
While they destruction hurled upon all those
Who in the basin of the harbor lay, 165

Straight from my thigh I drew my trusty sword,
And cut the cable of my dark prow'd ship,
And told my men to stretch out to their oars
And flee from all the wrack and ruin round.
They with their oars churned up the foaming deep, 170
Dreading destruction; from the beetling crags
My ship escaped into the welcome sea,
But all the other ships were there destroyed.

“We onward sail'd from thence with saddened hearts,
Our comrades lost, but glad to 'scape ourselves; 175
And at *Æeæ's* isle we next arrived;
There *Circe* dwelt, she of the waving locks,
The mighty goddess with melodious voice,
Own sister of *Æætēs* the malign.
For to the sun-god who sheds light on men 180
Perse, their mother brought forth both of them,
She who was daughter of *Oceanus*.

“Then silently we steered towards the shore
And to a land-locked haven brought our ship,
Sure some divinity o'erruled our course: 185
And disembarking for two days and nights
We rested there in utter weariness,

Worn out alike with toil and bitter grief.

“But when the dawn with all her shining locks
The third day ushered in; without delay 190

I seized my spear, and donned my trusty sword,
And climbed a rising ground hard by the ship,
If I might see the handiwork of man,

Or hear the welcome sound of human voice.

I viewed the country from a lofty cliff, 195

Above the earth with all its many paths,
The smoke I saw rising from Circe's halls,
Through a thick forest and a coppice of oaks.

And I debated in my inmost thoughts

Whether I should explore the land at once, 200

Since smoke I saw as from a kindled fire :

But this to me in doubt appeared the best,

First to return to where my galley lay

Close to the waterside, and to my crew

To give their morning meal, and afterwards 205

To send them onward to explore the land.

“As I drew near my ship, one of the gods
Took pity on me, solitary, sad;

And sent a stately stag with branching horns

Full in my path; down to the mountain stream 210

He through the woodland pasture made his way

To drink; for he was wearied by the heat:

And as he bounded from the tangled brake

Right through the spine and middle of the back

I smote him; through him passed the brazen spear; 215

Transfixed, and bleating in the dust he fell,

And gasping yielded up his breath and life.

I set my foot upon his side, and dragged

My brazen spear from out his welling wound

And thus I left him lying on the earth. 220

Withies and osier twigs I gathered next,

And weaving them together, made a rope

Close twisted, and about a fathom long,

And bound the feet together of the stag;

And on my neck and shoulder carried him 225

Towards my galley, leaning on my spear

With both my hands; it was not possible

To bear him on my shoulders with one hand

So vast and heavy was the mighty beast.

"I threw him on the ground close by the ship 230

And roused my crew from their despondent sleep,

To each of them I spoke some cheering words :

“ ‘O friends, why are ye sad? we shall not go
To Hades’ grim domain before our day;
Be of good cheer, and let us eat and drink 235
While we have goodly cheer on board our ship,
It is not yet our time to starve and die.’

“I spoke, and soon they yielded to my words;
From where they lay upon the lonely beach
With faces muffled in their robes they rose, 240
And gazed with wonder at the mighty stag:
A goodly beast he was; they gazed their fill,
And then they washed their hands with reverence,
And set about preparing the rich feast.

“All day till sunset we sat feasting there, 245
On plenteous venison, and on fragrant wine;
And when the sun went down and darkness fell,
We took our rest, and slept upon the shore.
And when the rosy-fingered dawn appeared
I called a council and addressed them all: 250

“ ‘Companions of my woes, hear now my words;
Beloved friends; we now have lost all count
Where is the east or west; or where the sun

Giver of light and life, sinks down to rest;

Or where he rises; we must now decide 255

What next to do, if aught remain to do;

I know not what to counsel or advise:

For when I climbed a rocky cliff to view,

I saw the isle begirt with trackless sea,

And all around its shore sinks towards the main: 260

But in the midst I saw some smoke arise

Through a thick forest, and a coppice of oaks.'

"I spoke, but their sad hearts within them sank,

Calling to mind the Læstrygonians,

And all Antiphates had done to them; 265

The Cyclops, and his savage violence,

The fell man-eater: bitterly they wept,

But bootless was it to give way to tears;

So I divided them in parties twain,

And told a leader off to either band; 270

One band I led, and one Eurylochus:

The lots I in a brazen helmet cast,

And to the brave Eurylochus it fell

To lead his band the first; so forth they went,

And two-and-twenty comrades went with him, 275

And wept; wept those who stayed with me.

“To Circe’s palace ’midst the glades they came,
Built on a rising ground with polished stones:
Around it savage wolves and lions prowled,
Which she with magic philtres had bewitched; 280
They sprang out on my men, but roused themselves
Waving their tails; and crouching fawned on them,
As dogs upon their master fawn for food
When he brings dainties pleasing to their taste;
The lions thus and wolves with cruel paws, 285
Crouched down and fawned on them: they shook
with fear,

And trembled when they saw the dreadful beasts.
At Circe’s threshold thus they waiting stood,
And heard the goddess with the waving locks
As she within sang with melodious voice, 290
And stood and worked before a mighty beam,
A shining web of beauty marvellous,
Of texture such as the immortals weave.

“Polites, of my comrades the most dear,
And my most cherished friend, addressed them thus:
‘O list, a goddess or a mortal’s voice, 296

Is it we hear within so sweetly singing,
As at her mighty loom she stands and works?
The very floor resounds with her clear song:
But let us call to her without delay.' 300

“Thus he addressed them, and they called aloud;
She issued forth, and oped her shining doors,
And called them in; they with bewilderment
All followed her except Eurylochus;
Who stood without, suspecting treachery. 305

“She led them in and bade them all sit down
On couches and on chairs, and offered them
Meal-cakes and cheese; and honey golden-hued
She seasoned with Pramnæan wine for them;
But with their food she mingled baleful drugs, 310
That they might quite forget their native land:
And when she offered them the cup to drink
They quaffed it off; straight with her magic rod
She struck them, and she penned them in her sties;
And they assumed the shape, the head, the grunt, 315
The very bristles and the hides of swine;
But human sense remained as heretofore,
So that they wept when shut in her vile dens.

And Circe threw before them food to eat,
Which swine who grovel in the mire devour; 320
Acorn and mast, and fruit of cornel tree.

“Eurylochus rushed back towards the ship,
To tell us of our comrades' dreadful fate;
But smitten to the heart with anguish sore
He strove for words; his eyes were filled with tears,
His breast was ready to burst forth in sobs: 326
But when we in our wonder questioned him,
At length he thus found words to tell their fate.

‘Noble Ulysses, as thou didst command
We sought the grove of oaks; and there we found 330
Deep in the glades a palace beautiful,
Built on a rising knoll with polished stones:
And there a mortal or a goddess sang
Melodiously, while weaving at a loom:
We raised our voices, and we called aloud, 335
And she came forth, and oped her shining doors
And called us in: they in bewilderment
All followed her, but I remained behind,
Suspecting treachery: they vanished all:
Not one of them appeared to me again, 340

Not one of them! though long I sat and watched.'

"He spoke; and I about my shoulders cast
My massive brazen sword with silver hilt,
And took my bow; and ordered him at once
To guide me in the path which he had gone: 345
He fell down at my feet and seized my knees,
And me entreated with these winged words:
'O force me not to go with thee, dread chief,
But leave me here behind; for well I know
That if thou go, thou never wilt return; 350
Nor wilt thou bring one comrade back with thee:
But let us fly with those who still are left,
While yet we may escape this dreadful day.'

"He spoke, and thus I answered in reply:
'Eurylochus, stay thou beside the ship, 355
And eat and drink thy fill in safety here;
But go I must, stern duty me constrains.'

"I said, and left the ship beside the sea:
And as I passed along the haunted glades
Which led to the enchantress' weird abode, 360
There Hermes met me, of the golden wand,
As I drew near the palace; he appeared

Like a fair stripling in the bloom of youth,
When the first down appears upon the lip;
He called me kindly by my name, and said : 365
‘Why dost thou go thy solitary way
O hapless one, across these lonely crags,
Not knowing where thou art? in Circe’s halls
Thy friends in durance lie, transformed to swine;
Confined in dens from whence is no escape : 370
And dost thou think that thou canst set them free?
I tell thee thou wilt never thence return,
But there wilt stay in durance vile with them;
But I can rescue thee from all these ills,
And will; here take with thee this antidote, 375
And fearless then to Circe’s palace go,
In danger’s hour it will thee well bestead :
But all her weird devices I will tell;
A potion she will offer thee to drink,
And she will mix in it her baleful drugs, 380
But they will not bewitch thee; all her spells
This antidote defies; I give it thee;
And now will tell thee what to do besides.
When Circe strikes thee with her potent rod,

Straight draw then from thy hip thy trusty sword, 385
And rush on her, as if to slay her there;
And she will yield in fear; and to her bed
She will invite thee; nor do thou refuse
The offer which the goddess makes to thee;
That she may free thy crew, and thee befriend: 390
But make her swear by all the blessed gods,
That she towards thee has no ill design;
And that she will no evil work on thee
When thou defenceless retest in her arms.'

"Thus spake the Argus slayer, as he gave 395
The herb to me, which from the earth he plucked,
And all its virtue he to me explained;
Black is its root, but milk-white is its flower,
And Moly is the name gods give to it,
And hard it is to find for gods and men, 400
But to the gods all things are possible.

"Then Hermes through the wooded island went
To far Olympus; I to Circe's halls.
And as I towards her palace took my way
My heart was stirred with many anxious thoughts. 405
I stood before the fair-haired Circe's gates

And shouted loudly; and she heard my voice,
And straight for me she oped her shining doors,
And called me in; and I with saddened heart
Followed her, as she led me to a chair 410
Of beauteous workmanship; with silver studs
Adorned, and placed a footstool for my feet.
And in a golden cup she offered me
A draught to drink in which her baleful drugs
She cast, intending mischief in her mind; 415
I drank it, but it wrought no spell on me:
Then with her wand she struck me, as she said:
'Off to thy sty, and with thy fellows lie!'
"I from my thigh flashed out my trusty blade,
And rushed on Circe, as to slay her there; 420
She shrieking fell before me, seized my knees,
And in entreaty spoke these winged words:
'What man art thou? and of what land and kin?
Amazement holds me chained that thou canst quaff
This potion, and not be bewitched by it: 425
For sure I am no other mortal man
Who let it pass the threshold of his lips
Could bear unscathed the working of its spell;

Thy soul is proof against its witcheries.

Thou needs must be that hero versatile 430

Ulysses, who the god, the Argus slayer,

He of the golden wand, aye said would come

From Troy returning in his black-hulled ship.

But sheathe thy sword, and turn we to my couch,

And let us both in mutual truth and trust 435

Together joy in love and love's delights.'

"She spoke, and thus I answered in reply:

'O Circe canst thou ask me to be kind

When thou my comrades hast transformed to swine,

Here in thy halls? now I am in thy power 440

Thou broodest mischief in thy mind for me;

Inviting me to share thy bower and couch

To rob me of my sense and manhood too,

When I defenceless rest within thy arms:

Goddess, I will not yield to thy request 445

Until thou swear a mighty oath to me

That thou against me hast no ill design.'

"I spoke, she took the oath as I required,

And when she swore the oath in solemn form,

I went with Circe to her beauteous couch. 450

“ Meanwhile her serving maidens busy were,
The four, who in her palace tended her,
The daughters of the fountains and the groves,
And haunted rills which flow towards the sea.
One on the couches goodly cushions piled, 455
Of purple, draping them with linen fair ;
Another opposite the couches placed
The silver boards, with golden baskets decked :
The third mixed in the silver bowl the wine,
Fragrant and sweet, and laid the golden cups : 460
The fourth fetched water, and a fire prepared
Beneath a tripod, and the water warmed :
And when within the tripod’s gleaming brass
The water bubbled up ; she drew therefrom
And mixed it with the water in my bath, 465
And when she tempered it to gentle heat
She made it o’er my head and shoulders stream,
And took the weary stiffness from my limbs.
Next she with crystal oil anointed me,
And clad me with a tunic and fair robe ; 470
And afterwards she led me to a chair
Of beauteous workmanship ; with silver studs

Adorned, and placed a footstool for my feet.
Meanwhile to wash my hands a serving maid
From a rich golden ewer water poured 475
Into a silver basin, and laid out
The polished board; the modest stewardess
Served bread and choice of viands from her store
Right willingly, inviting me to eat;
But I with little appetite for food 480
Sat lost in thought, my soul foreboding ill.
And Circe, when she saw me seated there,
Touching no food, possessed with bitter grief,
Approached me tenderly, and said these words:
'Why dost thou sit, Ulysses, like one dumb, 485
Eating thy heart in grief, and not thy food?
Perhaps thou fearest still some other snare;
Thou hast no cause for dread, a mighty oath
I even now have sworn, which I will keep.'
"She spoke, and thus I answered in reply: 490
'O Circe, tell me, how could any man
With feeling in his soul have heart to sit
And eat and drink in comfort, ere he saw
His comrades freed from bonds and suffering?

If thou from kindly feeling urgest me 495

To eat and drink, first set my comrades free,
That I may see those loved ones with my eyes.'

"I spoke, and Circe straightway left the hall,
She carried in her hand her magic wand;
The doors she opened of the sty; thereout 500
She drove them in the shape of full-grown swine;
They stood before her in their bestial guise;
And she going up to each anointed him
With some weird drug of opposite effect;
The bristles straightway vanished from their limbs 505
Which the first baleful drug had planted there,
And which the Witch divine had given to them;
And they were men again; younger they seemed,
More beauteous, and more stalwart than before:
They knew me, and each seized me by the hand 510
And all shed tears of joy: we wept aloud
The hall resounded with our glad laments:
Even the goddess pity felt and wept.

"The lovely one came near me and thus spake;
'Son of Laertes, fertile in resource, 515
Go to thy ship which lies now by the shore;

And the first thing of all thou hast to do
Is to haul up thy galley on the strand ;
And next her tackle, and thy treasures all,
To store away in safety in my grots ; 520
And go thyself and bring thy comrades here.'

"The goddess spoke, I readily complied,
And to the ship I went by the sea shore ;
I found my loved companions near the ship,
In piteous grief they mourned, hot tears they shed :
And as young calves meeting their well-fed dams 526
When they return from pasture to the farm,
Break from the penfold, lowing with delight,
And round their mothers frisk and bound with joy ;
Thus did the sight of me rejoice their eyes : 530
They wept for joy ; it seemed as if they saw
Rough Ithaca, where they were born and bred.
With tears of gladness thus they spoke to me :

'We joy, O noble chief at thy return,
As if we saw once more our Ithaca, 535
Our native shore ; but now relate to us
The fate which our companions have endured.'

"They spoke, I answered them with cheering words :

‘Comrades, the first thing that we have to do
Is to haul up our galley on the strand, 540
Next all her tackle, and our treasures place
In safety in these caves; then follow me,
And I will guide you all where ye will see
Our comrades safe and sound in Circe’s halls,
Eating and drinking; plenteous in their cheer.’ 545

“I spoke, and they were ready to obey;
Eurylochus alone strove to dissuade
And stop them; as he spoke these winged words:
‘Ye fools, where are ye going? do ye crave
More ills to suffer that ye trust yourselves 550
In Circe’s palace? where ye will be changed
To swine, or wolves, or lions, that ye be
Perforce the guardians of that dread abode?
What did the Cyclops, when our comrades sought
His stronghold, following our reckless chief? 555
By whose fool-hardiness they were destroyed.’

“He spoke, and I was minded there and then
As I my sword drew from my martial thigh
To smite with its sharp edge his rebel head
Straightway from off his shoulders to the dust, 560

Though he was very near to me in kin ;
But my companions pressed around, and sought
To turn my wrath aside with soothing words :
'Noble Ulysses, let us leave him here
To guard the ship, and we will follow thee 565
To Circe's haunted courts, be thou our guide.'

"They spoke, we left the ship by the seaside ;
Nor was the craven left beside the ship ;
He skulked behind, dreading my fearful threat.

"Our other comrades Circe entertained 570
Meanwhile with every care within her halls ;
When with a bath they had refreshed themselves,
They were anointed with rich olive oil,
In tunic robed, and garments of soft wool ;
We found them feasting in the hall in peace : 575
And when they met each other, and again,
The faces so well known they saw once more,
They wept aloud, and with their glad laments
The hall resounded : standing by my side
The lovely goddess then addressed me thus : 580
'Son of Laertes, skilled in stratagem,
No longer stir the sources of the tear :

I know myself the ills ye have endured
Upon the deep, wherein the sea fish play,
And all the cruelties which cruel men, 585
Your foes, have wreaked on you upon the land :
But feast now on good cheer, and drink your wine
Till ye recover all the heart and strength
With which ye left your own dear native shore,
Your craggy Ithaca : now travel worn, 590
And spiritless, ye cannot yet shake off
The memory of your sad pilgrimage ;
Nor have ye heart as yet to welcome joy ;
So many are the travails ye have proved.'

" These words she spoke ; and won our willing hearts ;
For a whole year we sat there day by day,
Feasting on goodly cheer, and drinking wine ;
But when the year was gone, and when the hours
Kept gliding on ; as month by month slipped by,
And when the spring with lengthening days returned ;
My comrades taking me aside, thus spoke : 601
' O faithless one, forget not quite thy home,
If yet it be thy fate to be preserved.
And thou have yet to reach once more in peace

Thy lofty palace and thy native soil.' 605

“They spoke, I felt the truth of all they said ;
And all that day till sunset we sat there,
Feasting on plenteous cheer, and fragrant wine ;
And when the sun went down and darkness fell,
They took their rest within the shadowy halls ; 610
And when I went to Circe's beauteous couch,
I threw myself before the goddess' feet,
Imploring her ; she listened to my prayer :
'Circe, wilt thou thy promise now fulfil,
Of which thou hast assurance given to me, 615
And send me home ? my heart is deeply stirred,
And my companions weary out my soul
With their complaints, when thou art far from us.'

“I spoke, the lovely goddess thus replied :
'Noble Ulysses, fertile in resource, 620
Ye shall not stay with me against your will ;
But first ye must another journey make,
And to the courts of Hades ye must go,
And dread Persephoné, and question there
The spirit of the blind old Theban seer, 625
Tiresias, whose faculties remain

Though dead he be ; to him of all the dead
Alone Persephoné has reason given,
And all the others fleeting shadows are.'

"Thus Circe spoke, my heart within me sank, 630
And sitting on the couch I wept, nor wished
Longer to live or see the light of day :
When I had wept my fill, I said to her :
'O Circe who to Hades will me guide?
No black hulled ship has ever reached that shore.'

"I spoke, the lovely goddess thus replied : 636
'Noble Ulysses, fertile in resource,
Thou wilt not need a pilot for thy ship ;
But raise the mast, and spread the snow-white sail,
And sit ; the northern breeze will waft her on. 640
When thou hast crossed the Ocean in thy bark,
At the wild shore of dread Persephoné,
Where wave the lofty poplars of her grove,
And fruitless willows trail ; beach there thy ship,
Upon the shore of Ocean's eddying deeps : 645
But go thyself to Hades' dank abodes,
Where into Acheron their waters pour
Fierce Phlegethon, and the Cocytus' flood,

An off-stream of the Stygian wave; a rock
Marks where the two hoarse sounding currents mix :
There, gallant hero, on that very spot
Which thou with toil must reach, as I command,
Dig out a trench, a cubit long and broad,
And make libations there for all the dead ;
Of honey first with milk ; next luscious wine, 655
The third of water, strewn with golden meal :
And to the fleeting shadows of the dead
Make many supplications ; promising
On reaching thine own halls in Ithaca,
To sacrifice a barren steer to them ; 660
The very best thou hast amongst thy herds ;
And offer costly gifts upon the pyre :
And to Tiresias himself a ram,
All sable hued, the choice of all thy flocks.
When to the wailing kindred of the dead 665
Thou thus hast many supplications made,
There sacrifice a ram and sable ewe,
Turning them towards the shades of Erebus ;
Turning away thyself with glance towards
The river's rapid flood : to thee in crowds 670

The souls of the departed dead will flock :
Then on thy comrades lay a strict command
To flay and burn the sheep which thou hast slain,
And to the gods to pray; to Hades' might,
And also to the dread Persephoné. 675
And from thy hip draw thou thy trusty sword
And sit thou down, and with its threatening point
Keep back the fleeting shadows of the dead;
And let them not come near and taste the blood,
Till thou enquire of Tiresias. 680
And then, O chief of men, the Seer will come,
And will point out to thee the path and course
Which thou must go upon thy journey home,
Across the deep wherein the sea-fish play.'

"She spoke, and gold enthronéd Dawn appeared; 685
Tunic and robe she gave to me to wear
And in an ample garment, silver white,
Graceful and fine the Nymph herself arrayed;
About her waist a golden zone she cast,
Of wondrous beauty; o'er her head a veil. 690

"But I went through the palace to arouse
My comrades, with a cheering word for each:

‘In idle slumber let us not indulge,
But let us go; the goddess bids farewell.’

“I spoke, and they obeyed me readily. 695

But even thence I did not scathless bring
My comrades all; amongst them was a youth
Elpenor called by name; with no great gifts
Of gallantry in fight, or ready wit:

He overcome with wine lay down to sleep 700

Far from his comrades, on the palace roof,
Seeking to breathe the cool air of the night:

He heard the noise and stir his comrades made
Preparing to depart, and started up

In sudden haste; and in his heedlessness 705

He missed the lofty stairs, and from the roof
Fell straight; and from the column of his back
His neck he broke; his soul to Hades fled.

“Then to my comrades setting out I said:

‘Ye now are thinking of our native land, 710

And starting on the way to our loved home;

But Circe shows another path for us;

First to the Courts of Hades we must go,

And dread Persephoné; and question there

The spirit of the Seer Tiresias.' 715

"I spoke these words; their heart within them
sank,

And on the ground they crouched, and tore their
hair;

But bootless was it to give way to tears:

So grieving as we went, with tearful cheeks,

We sought our black-hulled ship upon the beach. 720

"Thither meanwhile had Circe gone herself,
And bound on board a ram and sable ewe,
Unmarked by us; what mortal man may see
A god who wills invisible to be?"

-

BOOK XI

ARGUMENT.

Tale of Ulysses—Hades.

DAY 35.

“**A**ND when we reached the galley and the sea,
We launched her first of all upon the deep,
And stepped the mast and ready made the sails,
And put the sheep on board the black-hulled ship,
And then embarked ourselves, shedding hot tears. 5
Circe, dread goddess with the waving locks
And voice melodious, sent us a fair breeze,
A good companion ; which swelled out our sails,
Following the wake of the dark beak'd ship :
On board of her we made the tackle fast, 10
And lay down at our ease ; while favoring gale,
And steersman, kept her steady to her course :

All day the swelling sails the tackle strained,
As she ran swiftly o'er the sea's expanse.
At sunset, when the streets in shadow lay 15
We reached the shores which are the boundary
Of the unfathomable Ocean stream.
There are the city and the land where dwell
Enshrouded in thick mist and gloomy cloud
The people of Cimmeria; on them 20
The radiant sun shines never with his beams;
Not when he climbs the starry vault of heaven,
Or from the zenith turns to earth again:
But o'er the wretched dwellers of this land,
The baleful night for ever spreads its pall. 25
And there when we arrived, we beached the ship,
And put the sheep on shore; and went ourselves
Along the margin of the Ocean stream;
And reached the land which Circe told us of.
"Then Perimedes and Eurylochus, 30
Held fast the victims for the sacrifice;
I from my hip drew forth my trusty sword
And dug a trench a cubit long and broad;
For all the dead I there libations made,

Of honey first with milk, next luscious wine, 35
The third of water; strewn with golden meal:
And to the fleeting shadows of the dead,
Made many supplications; promising
On reaching my own halls in Ithaca,
To sacrifice a barren steer to them, 40
The very best that in my herds was found;
And offer costly gifts upon the pyre;
And to Tiresias himself a ram,
All sable-hued, the choice of all my flocks.
When I had many vows and prayers addressed 45
To them, the mighty kindred of the dead;
I took the sheep myself, and cut their throats;
Into the trench the dark blood spouted forth.
Then lo! the souls of the departed dead,
Came flocking from the gloom of Erebus; 50
Brides in the bloom of youth, and hoary men
Who many ills had suffered; tender maids
Whose hearts were all unskilled in grief and woe;
Heroes in battle slain, with brazen spears
Transfixed; their armour stained with blood and gore:
All these in crowds came flitting round the trench

With direful shrieking : I waxed pale with dread.
I urged my comrades then with strict command
To flay and burn the sheep which they had slain,
And to the gods to pray ; to Hades' might, 60
And also to the dread Persephoné.

And I myself with sword drawn from my thigh
Sat there on guard ; and with its threatening point,
Kept back the fleeting shadows of the dead ;
And let them not come near to taste the blood, 65
Till I had questioned there, Tiresias.

“ Elpenor's ghost appeared to me the first ;
O'er him the earth, trodden by many feet,
Was not yet piled ; his corse we left behind
In Circe's halls, unburied and unwept, 70
Since other duties claimed our anxious care.

With pity in my soul I wept for him ;
And thus addressed him with these wingèd words :
‘ Elpenor, by what pathway hast thou reached
The shades of gloomy night ? for thou on foot 75
Hast far outstripped me in my black hulled ship.’

“ I spoke, he answered groaning in reply :
‘ Noble Ulysses, fertile in resource,

My evil fate, and my intemperance,
Have wrought this woe on me: I laid me down 80
To take my rest on Circe's palace roof,
And in descending in my heedlessness
I missed the lofty stair, and from the roof
Fell straight; and from the column of my back
I broke my neck; my soul to Hades fled! 85
But by thy love for all those absent ones,
Thy wife; thy sire who nourished thee, a babe;
And thy Telemachus, now left at home
The sole hope of thy house; I thee entreat:
For well I know that thou wilt steer thy ship 90
From Hades' realms back to *Ææa's* isle;
O chief, when thou art there remember me!
O leave me not unburied and unwept;
So that I bring not down God's curse on thee;
But burn me on the pyre with all my arms, 95
And on the shore, close by the hoary sea
Raise thou a tomb to me, the hapless one;
So those who pass thereby shall know my fate.
This do for me; and o'er my resting-place
Fix thou the oar, with which I toiled so oft 100

With my companions when I was alive.'

"He spoke, and thus I answered in reply :

'Ill-fated one, thus I will do for thee.'

"Thus sadly we conversed while seated there ;

On one side of the trench I with my sword 105

Kept guard upon the blood ; while opposite

My comrade's ghost related all his tale.

"The shade of Anticleia next appeared,

The daughter of the brave Autolycus,

My mother ; dead whom I had left alive 110

When I set out for sacred Ilium.

Grieved to the heart, I wept to see her there ;

But though in anguish sore I kept her back,

Nor let e'en her approach to taste the blood,

Till I had questioned there Tiresias. 115

"At last the spirit of the Theban seer

Approached ; a golden sceptre in his hand :

He knew me, and addressed me with these words :

'Son of Laertes fertile in resource

Unhappy one, why hast thou hither come ? 120

Leaving the light of day to visit here

The dead ; and these domains unknown to joy ?

Back from the trench, and lower thy threatening
blade!

That I may taste the blood, and sooth unfold.'

"He spake, and I drew back, and in its sheath 125
Thrust back my sword adorned with golden studs.

And soon as he had tasted the dark blood
The holy Seer addressed me with these words:

'A blissful home return O noble chief
Is what thou cravest; but the gods ordain 130

That it must be right sorrowful for thee:

For well I trow the Shaker of the earth
Will not forget thee; who hast roused his ire,
Since thou hast blinded his beloved son.

But ne'ertheless, though doomed to suffer woe, 135
Thou still may'st reach thy home: so thou but learn
To curb thine own and thy companions' will:

When thou approachest to Trinacria's shore
From o'er the azure sea, in thy brave bark,
Pasturing on that island, thou wilt find 140

The sun-god's oxen, and his goodly sheep;
The god who all things sees, and all things hears:
If thou wilt spare his flocks, and turn thy mind

To nought but thy return, ye yet may reach
Your Ithaca; though ills ye must endure. 145
But if ye spoil his flocks, I prophesy,
Destruction to thy comrades, and thy ship:
And if by lucky chance thou 'scape thyself,
Late thy return will be, and full of woe;
Thy comrades lost, on board a foreign ship. 150
And trouble wilt thou find in thine own home,
Young princes, flown with pride, wasting thy goods;
And offering gifts to woo thy goddess wife:
But retribution wilt thou bring on these.
When thou hast slain the suitors of thy wife 155
Within thy palace; or by stratagem,
Or open force, thy trusty sword in hand;
Thou still must wander; and must take with thee
An oar right deftly shaped; until thou reach
A people who know nothing of the sea; 160
Who eat their food unflavoured with its salt,
And nothing know of ships with painted bows,
Or balanced oars; which are the wings of ships.
A sign I give thee unmistakeable;
Fail not to mark it; when on foreign soil 165

A wayfarer shall meet thee, and shall say :
The burden which thy noble shoulder bears
Must be a winnowing fan, to husk the grain ;
Then in the earth fix there the balanced oar,
And to the sea-god Neptune sacrifice 170
A ram, a bull, a boar, with solemn rites ;
And home returning offer hecatombs
To the immortal gods who rule in heaven,
To each and all of them in order due.
Then death shall gently come to thee at last, 175
Escaped from sea, honored, and full of years ;
And happy shall thy subjects round thee be :
This prophecy is true, which I declare.'

"He spoke, and thus I answered in reply :
'May all this follow as the gods decree : 180
But, O Tiresias, now tell me this ;
I see the ghost of my dead mother there,
Who near the trench in silence sits ; nor cares
To look me in the face, who am her son ;
Nor utters she one word to me ; oh ! say, 185
Dread lord, how she may know me, who I am.'

"I spoke, and thus he answered in reply :

'This I can easily explain to thee ;
Whatever one of the departed dead
Whom thou may'st suffer to approach the blood, 190
Will to thy questions give a true reply ;
But whom thou may'st prevent from tasting it,
In silence will draw back and disappear.'

"At this the soul of Lord Tiresias
Departed, and the realms of Hades sought ; 195
Since he had told me all the gods decreed.
But I stirred not until my mother came,
And drank the dark red blood : she knew me straight,
And grieving spoke to me these winged words :
'My child, how hast thou reached these gloomy shades
And thou alive ? 'tis hard for mortal eyes
To gaze on this sad scene ; for all around
Are mighty rivers, and terrific floods ;
Oceanus the first, which none can cross
On foot, except he have a gallant ship : 205
Or hast thou come here with thy ship and crew
Wandering so long on thy return from Troy ?
Hast thou not yet arrived at Ithaca,
Nor seen thy wife in thine own halls at home ?'

“She spoke, and thus I answered in reply : 210
‘My mother, I have come to Hades’ realms
The soul to question of Tiresias :
Not yet have I been near Achæan land,
Nor touched our own dear soil ; a wretched waif
I have not ceased from wandering ; ever since - 215
I went with Agamemnon, godlike chief,
To Troy, to fight the Trojan chivalry.
But I entreat thee, tell me now in truth,
How death with its long sleep has fallen on thee ;
Perchance thou languishedst in long disease, 220
Or Artemis, the Arrow Queen thee smote
With her sweet painless shafts and gentle death ?
And tell me of my father and my son,
Whom I so long have left ; still rests with them
My kingly rule ? or does another chief 225
Now hold the sway, hopeless of my return ?
And is my wedded wife still true to me
In heart and soul ? Is she a faithful guard
Still to my boy, and all that I possess ?
Or has some Grecian chief now wedded her ?’ 230
“I spoke, my honored mother thus replied :

'Ah! she with patient and enduring heart
Within thy halls remains; in bitter tears
Her miserable nights and days are spent :
No one usurps thy rule; Telemachus, 235
Still holds in peace the sway of thy domain,
And still enjoys the honors of a chief,
And homage due to him; but far from these
Thy father never visits now the town,
But in the solitary country dwells; 240
Nor will he rest on couches soft and warm,
On tapestry, and on cushions of bright hue;
But in the winter, 'midst the slaves he sleeps;
And lies among the ashes of the fire,
And sorry garments wears: in summer's heat, 245
And when in autumn time, the fruit grows ripe,
In his vine shadowed garden, on the ground,
His lowly bed of fallen leaves is made;
There he lies down in sorrow; in his heart
Grief swells with yearning still for thy return; 250
And trouble comes upon him with his years.
And thus in trouble did I perish too;
Nor did the Arrow Queen, the archer sure,

Visit me in her mercy in my home,
And smite me with her gentle painless shafts; 255
Nor did disease with its sad wasting pain,
The common lot, take from my limbs their life;
But yearning and anxiety for thee,
And tenderness for thee, my noble son,
Robbed me of life, so sweet and dear to all.' 260

“She spoke; I pining, longed with all my soul
To clasp my mother's shade in my embrace;
Thrice I attempted urged by wild desire
To throw my arms about her; from my arms
Thrice like a shadow or a dream she fled, 265
And bitter sorrow cut me to the heart.
And I addressed her with these winged words:
‘O mother, dost thou shun my fond embrace?
Locked in each other's loving arms we might
In Hades even find a joy in woe! 270
Or is this but a shadow which I see,
Which the august Persephoné has raised,
That yet a deeper grief may swell my tears?’
“I spoke, my honored mother thus replied:
My son, thou most ill-fated among men, 275

Persephoné, the child of Jove, in nought
Beguiles thee; and in this I but obey
The law which binds all mortals when they die;
No longer sinews knit the flesh and bone,
But soon as life and motion leave the frame 280
The mighty breath of the consuming fire
Devours all these; dream like the spirit flees:
But speed thou back to life and light and love;
And hold all these things in thy memory,
And to thy wife tell all that thou hast learnt.' 285

“ Thus sadly we conversed; then other dames
Appeared, raised up by dread Persephoné,
The wives and daughters of renownéd chiefs:
In crowds they gathered round the dark red blood.
And I took counsel with myself, and thought, 290
How I might converse hold with each of them;
This seemed the wisest plan to gain my wish;
I from my hip drew forth my keen-edged sword,
And let them not together taste the blood;
But made them each draw near in turn, and tell, 295
Her race and name; so I might question all.

“ Tyro came first, born of a noble sire

The daughter of Salmoneus, honored lord,
And wife of Cretheus son of Æolus:
She loved the genius of Enipeus' stream 300
The very fairest stream which flows on earth;
And oft she wandered by its limpid rills.
He who surrounds the earth and in his might
Shakes its firm base, assumed Enipeus' form:
And where the eddying river meets the sea 305
He lay with her; the azure water rose,
And like a wall the wave around them stood,
And arching over bowed to his behest,
And thus concealed the god and mortal dame.
He loosed her zone, and lulled her off to sleep: 310
And when the god had satisfied his love,
He seized her hand with tenderness and said:
'Joy in our love fair dame, within the year
Fair children shalt thou bear; for fruitless never
Is an immortal's love; and fail thou not 315
To nurse and cherish them with tender care;
Now to thy home return; locked in thy breast,
In silence keep the secret of our loves,
For I am Neptune, Shaker of the earth.'

“He spoke and vanished 'midst the seething waves. 320
Pelias and Neleus hence to her were born,
Both stalwart vassals of the mighty Jove:
Pelias, enriched with many thriving flocks,
Dwelt in Iolchus with its stretching meads;
The other dwelt on sandy Pylos' shores. 325

“This queen of dames to Cretheus afterwards
Her other sons, Æson and Pheres bore,
And Amythaon, flower of chivalry.

“And after her I saw Antiope,
Asópus' daughter; she could make the boast 330
That in the arms of Jove himself she lay:
Two sons, Amphion, Zethus, she brought forth;
And these were they who the foundations laid
Of Thebes, the stronghold with the seven gates;
And raised a wall around it, fenced with towers: 335
For even they, with all their warlike might,
Dare not dwell there amid the stretching plains
While Thebes lay open, and ungirt by walls.

“And after her Alcmena next I saw,
Amphitryon's spouse; from Jove's embrace she bore 340
Undaunted Hercules of lion heart:

And she in Pylos with her Neleus reigned ;

And children of renown she bore to him
Nestor and Chromius, Periclymenus, 365
A lordly chief the last; and these besides
The shapely Pero, wondrous for her charms,
And wooed by all the chiefs who dwelt around:
Neleus refused to give the charming maid,
Except to him who should a foray make 370
On mighty Iphiclus in Phylace;
And drive his oxen, broad browed, crumpled horned;
A daring exploit; the skilled soothsayer,
Melampus only undertook the task:
But the gods' will stayed its accomplishment; 375
And the wild herdsmen kept him bound in chains,
But when the months and days were all fulfilled
Of the revolving year, and seasons waned,
He by his wondrous gifts of prophecy
Escaped, and thus fulfilled the will of Jove. 380
 "Leda I saw, the wife of Tyndarus:
To Tyndarus two dauntless sons she bore;
The famous Castor, tamer of the horse,
The boxer Pollux: the all-teeming earth
Received them in her bosom when alive: 385

But they below the earth from mighty Jove
A wondrous favor earn; one day they live,
And on alternate days they sleep in death
And as the gods are they in honor held.

“Iphimedeia was the next I saw 390

The wife and consort of Aloeus,
They say the love of Neptune she enjoyed:
Two sons she bare, brief was their term of life,
Otus and Ephialtes were they called;
The most gigantic youths whom teeming earth 395
Has ever nourished, and most beautiful,
Next to Orion, hunter ever famed.

At nine years old nine cubits was their breadth,
And fathoms nine was their colossal height.
They dared to threaten the immortal gods 400
That they would even to Olympus bring
The din of furious battle; and aspired
To pluck up Ossa by the roots, and pile
Its mass upon Olympus; and to heap
On Ossa Pelion, with its quivering leaves; 405
And thus to pave a way to scale the heavens:
And this they had achieved if they had reached

Ever the strength of manhood : but Jove's son
Whom fair Latona bare, destroyed them both,
Before the beard appeared upon their cheeks, 410
And ere the down was budding on their lip.

“And Phædra then, and Procris next I saw ;
And beauteous Ariadne, daughter fair
Of Minos the malign ; whom Theseus brought
From island Crete, to Athens' sacred mount : 415
Her love he ne'er enjoyed ; for Artemis
Slew her for Bacchus' sake in Dié's isle.

“And Mœra next, and Clymene I saw,
And Eriphylé hateful one, who sold
Her husband's life, bribed by a golden gaud. 420

“But I could never tell you all I saw,
The wives and daughters of heroic chiefs ;
Nor name them all, till night ambrosial fled.
But now it is the hour to seek repose,
Either on board your ship, among the crew, 425
Or in these halls ; the safety of my voyage
I trust to the immortal gods, and you !”

He finished speaking, and they silence kept,
Spell-bound with marvel through the shadowy halls,

The lily-armed Arete spoke at last; 430

“Does not this hero seem, Phæacians,
Alike endued with manly beauty, strength,
And mind composed? ’tis true he is my guest
But ye my honor and my duty share:

Oh! send not such an one away in haste; 435

Nor stint the gifts which he so greatly needs,
And which the gods to you have freely given.”

Then Echinéus, aged chief, thus spoke

The most revered of the Phæacian lords:

“With point and judgment has our thoughtful queen
Addressed you, noble friends; obey her words: 441

But to Alcinous it appertains

That he command us what to do and say.”

Alcinous in answer thus replied:

“As surely as I live and rule o’er you 445

Phæacian oarsmen, this is my command,
Although our guest be yearning for his home,

Let him remain with patience here with us

Until the morrow; when I can complete

The full tale of my gifts; his homeward voyage 450

Will be an anxious care to all of us;

And specially to me, who rule this land."

Ulysses fertile in resource replied :

"Most mighty lord the king, Alcinous,

If for a year ye urge me to remain, 455

And at its term would send me on my voyage

Enriched with noble gifts ; I fain would stay :

For it would more to my advantage be

To reach my native land, so much beloved,

Full-handed, graced by many gifts from you : 460

Thus I should win more honor and respect

From all my subjects when they greeted me,

On my return to Ithaca and home."

Alcinous thus answered in reply :

"We, O Ulysses, do not thee regard 465

As a deceiver or pretending knave,

Such as there are in numbers spread about

On the earth's fertile bosom, weaving ever

Their lying stories ; no one knows from whence.

Thou knowest how to clothe thy noble thoughts 470

In words of eloquence ; thou dost relate

With all a minstrel's poesy, the woes

Endured by all the Argives, and by thee ;

Continue now thy truthful tale, and say
Didst thou meet any of thy hero friends 475
Who went with thee to Troy, and perished there ?
The night is not advanced, nor is it time
To seek for rest ; pursue thy wondrous tale.
For I could stay and listen till the dawn
So thou hadst patience still to tell thy woes." 480

Ready Ulysses answered in reply :

"Most mighty lord the king, Alcinous,
There is a time for speech and for repose :
But if thou dost desire to hear me yet
I will not baulk thy wish, but will relate 485
The still more miserable woes which fell
On my companions ; who the Trojan strife,
With its wild mournful battle cry, escaped ;
And perished afterwards, on their return ;
Destroyed by a vile woman's wickedness. 490

"Then at the hests of chaste Persephoné
The shades of gentle women vanished all.
And next the ghost of Atreus' son appeared
In sorrow ; and around him gathered were
His followers, who in Ægisthus' halls 495

Together with him fell, and shared his fate;
He knew me when he tasted the dark blood;
Thick fell his tears, and bitterly he wept;
He strove to reach me, as he feebly raised
His hands towards me; but in him alas! 500
No more the strength and vital force remained
Which strung erstwhile his strong and supple limbs;
I looked on him with pity, and I wept;
And thus addressed him with these wingèd words:
'Most noble Agamemnon, king of men 505
How hast thou fallen into death's long sleep?
Has Neptune raised a furious hurricane
Of stormy winds, and drowned thee in thy ships?
Or hast thou died on land before the foe
Making a foray on his herds and flocks 510
Or fighting for his city and its spoil?'
"I spoke, and thus he answered in reply:
'Noble Ulysses, fertile in resource,
The sea-god has not by the furious blasts
Of stormy tempests drowned me in my ships; 515
Nor did I fall before the foe on land:
But I was murdered: and my death and doom

Were plotted by Ægisthus and my wife,
That devilish woman : he inviting me
To banquet in his palace, murdered me ; 520
As one might slaughter at his stall the ox :
I perished thus by a most woeful death ;
My comrades round me mercilessly slain,
As boars with shining tusks might butchered be
To furnish forth a wedding festival, 525
Or friendly feast, or sumptuous repast,
For some rich man, or some luxurious lord.
Thou hast been present in the ranks of death
And seen men fall in struggle hand to hand,
And in the mingled battle's stern debate ; 530
But thou hadst horror felt hadst thou seen this :
How round the wine cup and the festive board
We butchered lay, in that fell banquet hall,
And the whole floor and pavement reeked with blood :
And then I heard the voice of Priam's child, 535
Cassandra, in her death shriek, as she fell
On me ; whom fiendish Clytemnestra stabbed :
As I lay dying on the ground, and clutched
With wavering hand my sword ; that shameless one

Turned from me pitiless; nor would she deign 540

To close my staring eyes and gaping mouth,

As I departed to the shades below.

Nought can more shameless or more worthless be

Than woman; who could in their minds implant

The will to do such deeds? such fearful deeds 545

As she contrived; her husband and her lord

To murder; and I fondly looked to meet

My children and my servants in my home!

Oh! she has wrought a hideous deed; which piles

Perpetual shame upon her gentle sex 550

For ever, be they e'er so virtuous.'

"He spoke, and thus I answered in reply:

'Ye gods! almighty Jove from first to last

Has wrought sad misery by woman's wiles

On Atreus' house: for many of us have fallen 555

In Helen's cause; for thee when far away

Thy Clytemnestra also planned this doom!'

"I spoke, and thus he straight replied to me:

'Never to woman be too gentle thou,

Nor tell her all thou dost intend to do! 560

But part thy purpose tell, and part conceal.

But as for thee, Ulysses, from thy wife
Fear thou no ill; modest, true, and wise,
Is thy Penelope, Icarus' child;
Her whom we left when starting for the war, 565
Thy gentle newly married wife; thy boy,
An infant then, was hanging at her breast;
And now with heroes he in council sits
In peace; and will his loving father see,
And greet with welcome on his home return. 570
To me alas! that woman vile forbade
That I should satisfy my longing eyes
By gazing on my son: she slew me first.
And now I tell thee, graft this in thy mind;
Steer not thy bark toward thy native shore 575
In open daylight; but arrive by stealth:
Nor faith, nor trust, put thou in womankind.

“‘But tell me truly now if thou hast heard
Aught of my son? say is he yet alive?
And if he be not dead but lives on earth, 580
In sandy Pylos, or Orchomenus,
Or Sparta's plains where Menelaus dwells,
Hast thou heard tidings of Orestes' fate?’

“He spoke, and thus I answered in reply :

‘Why, son of Atreus, askest thou these things? 585

I know not if he be alive or dead ;

It is not good to babble idle words.’

“Thus we together stood in converse sad :

And then the shade of Peleus’ son approached ;

And of Patroclus, and Antilochus, 590

And Ajax too ; of all the Grecian chiefs

Except Achilles, the most beautiful

In manly grace, and symmetry of form.

The ghost of him who was so swift of foot,

Grandson of Æacus, me recognised ; 595

And grieving spoke to me these wingèd words :

‘Son of Laertes, fertile in resource,

Undaunted one, what exploit hast thou dared ?

How hast thou ventured to these shades below,

Where only dwell the skill-less dead ? the ghosts 600

Of mortals who have ended all their toils ?’

“He spoke, and thus I answered in reply :

‘O son of Peleus, bravest of the Greeks,

I have come here to ask Tiresias

If he can give me counsel or advice 605

How I may reach my craggy Ithaca.

Not yet have I been near the Grecian land,

Nor put my foot upon my native soil ;

Still woes I suffer in my pilgrimage.

But thou Achilles dost surpass in bliss 610

The heroes who have gone before ; and none

Will ever rival thee ; for when alive

We Greeks thee honored as thou wert a god ;

And now e'en here, thou rulest o'er the dead :

Achilles, mourn not thy untimely death.' 615

“ I spoke, he straightway answered in reply :

‘ Ulysses, talk not thus of death to me ;

I would prefer to be the veriest thrall,

Who for a needy, landless master sweats,

Than to be lord of all the skill-less dead ! 620

But let me talk now of my noble boy ;

Tell me, is he the foremost in the fight ?

And of the honored Peleus, hast thou heard

If o'er the Mÿrmidons he still holds sway ?

Or have they bated aught in their respect 625

In Greece and Phthia to his kingly rule,

Because from age his hands are feeble now ?

Oh! would that I still in the light of day
Could his defender be; such as I was
When, I erstwhile the champion of the Greeks, 630
Struck down the bravest of the brave at Troy;
If I could visit; brief the term might be,
Thus in my strength my father's house again;
I would raise up a terror of my wrath,
And mighty hands, on each and all of those, 635
Who spoiled and robbed him of his kingly rule!’

“ He spoke, and thus I answered in reply :
‘ Of noble Peleus I can tell thee nought;
But of thy cherished Neoptolemus,
At thy request I tell thee all I know : 640
I brought him in my trim and gallant ship
Myself from Scyros to the armēd Greeks:
When in our leaguer round the Trojan hold,
We council held, his speech was prompt and sure;
None his superiors in council were, 645
Except the godlike Nestor and myself.
But when with arms upon the Trojan plain
We fought, not long remained he in the rear,
Nor in the ranks; but to the front he rushed,

Yielding to none in warlike hardihood: 650
And many chiefs he slew in deadly fray;
I will not say the names of all who fell
Before him when he battled for the Greeks,
But mention only one, Eurypylus,
The son of Telephus, whom he struck down; 655
And many comrades fell around that chief,
The Cetii, who fought for spoils of war;
And none who rivalled him in manly grace
Save Memnon the puissant, did I see.
And when we all the bravest of the Greeks, 660
Our places took within the wooden horse,
Built by Epeius; under my command,
And my direction, was the ambushment;
I gave the order when to issue forth,
And when to stay within our hiding-place: 665
Then all the chiefs and leaders of the Greeks
Showed signs of dread, and wiped away the tear;
No tear he shed; I watched him narrowly;
Nor did the color blanch on his fresh cheeks:
Impatiently he waited my command 670
To issue forth; his hand upon his sword,

And brazen spear, burning with lust for fight.
When we had stormed and sacked the lofty keep
Of Priam's city; he on board his ship
Embarked with goodly spoil and honored gifts, 675
Unharm'd; nor in the struggle hand to hand
Received he wounds from sword or brazen lance;
And in that furious struggle wounds were rife.'

"I spoke; the shade of him so swift of foot
Strode back towards the meads of Asphodel, 680
Joying to hear the glory of his son.

"And many souls of my departed friends
Stood round in sorrow, and their sorrows told,
The ghost of Ajax, son of Telamon
Alone drew back; and lonely stalked apart; 685
In anger at the quarrel which we had,
When at the Grecian ships I urged my claim,
And won Achilles' arms; which as a prize
His mother offered; and the Trojan chiefs,
And Pallas too adjudged the arms to me. 690

Oh! would that I had never won that prize!
Which brought that noble head down to the earth,
And cost the life of Ajax! who excelled,

In manly beauty and heroic deeds,
All other chiefs except great Peleus' son. 695

With gentle words I made my speech to him :

“ ‘ O Ajax, son of noble Telamon,
Wilt thou not e'en in death forget thy wrath,
Caused by our contest for those cursed arms ?
The gods decreed this punishment for us, 700
And wrought thy woe ; the tower of our defence.
And we the Greeks all sorrowed for thy loss,
As we had sorrowed for Achilles' self.

Jove, and none other was to blame for this,
Who hated all the warrior Grecian host ; 705
Therefore he willed thy doom : approach great chief,
And listen to the words I fain would say ;
Master thy wrath, and bate thy lofty pride.' ”

“ I spoke, but nought he answered in reply,
But into darkness strode and disappeared 710
Among the other shades ; but even then
He had addressed me angry as he was,
Or I again had spoken ; but I wished
With longing in my mind to see the shades
Of many others of the mighty dead. 715

“Minos I saw, the glorious son of Jove ;
He sat, a golden sceptre in his hand
And judged the dead ; and they around the king
Sitting and standing in the spacious gate
Of Hades’ realms, awaited his award. 720

“The huge Orion was the next I saw ;
He chased across the plains of Asphodel
The shadowy game, which on the mountains lone
Himself had killed ; and in his hands he bore
A mace of solid brass, infrangible. 725

“Tityus I saw ; the son of glorious Earth
Stretched on the ground ; and his gigantic bulk
Nine acres covered : on each side of him
A vulture sat, and at his liver tore ;
Down to his very vitals plunged their beaks ; 730
Nor could his hands drive back the loathsome birds :
For he Latona strove to violate,
The peerless paramour of Jove himself,
As she towards Pytho wandered ; on her way
Through Panopéus, and its lovely glades. 735

“And Tantalus I saw in misery ;
As in a pool he stood, the limpid wave

Lapped up towards his chin ; his burning thirst
The hoary sinner strove to slake, in vain ;
Fast as he stooped to catch the running tide 740
It gliding slipped away, and disappeared ;
And the dark earth was shown around his feet,
Parched by the mighty power of the god.
And waving trees trailed down above his head,
Their fruit ; pomegranate, pear, and luscious fig. 745
The blooming olive, apple golden-hued ;
And as he snatched at them with eager hand
The wind aloft tossed up the swinging branch
Beyond his reach, towards the shadowy clouds.
“ And next I saw the woe of Sisyphus, 750
Upheaving with his hands the massive rock ;
As up the steep he strained with hand and foot
To roll the stone ; when almost at the top
A mighty power toppled it back again ;
Down to the plain hurtled the headlong crag : 755
And he once more with sinews on the stretch,
Resumed his labor ; until from his limbs
The sweat ran down, and dust stood on his brow.
“ And then I saw the might of Hercules ;

'Twas but a phantom ; for the hero's self 760

Revels in bliss with the immortal gods,

And Hebe of the graceful limbs has won

To be his spouse ; the child of mighty Jove,

And Juno, who the golden sandals wears.

Round him the dead, shrieked with wild cries of fear,

As noisome birds ; and he like gloomy night 766

Bared his dread bow, with arrow on its string,

And glared about him, aye prepared to shoot.

A wondrous baldrick o'er his chest he wore,

A golden cincture, wrought with weird device ; 770

Wild bears and boars, lions with flaming eyes ;

Battle and strife, carnage and homicide :

The workman who that cincture had enwrought

With skill so wondrous, ne'er should work again.

"He knew me when on me he cast his eyes, 775

And in his pity spoke these winged words :

"Son of Laertes, fertile in resource,

Alas for thee ! under the sun's bright beams

As dark a fate thou draggest after thee

As I ; and I although the son of Jove, 780

Sprung from the Ancient one, a misery

Suffered unspeakable ; for I was bound
To serve a man far my inferior ;
And heavy tasks he gave me to perform :
He sent me here to bring the Dog from Hell ; 785
He thought he could no harder task inflict :
But I from Hades dragged the beast away ;
Hermes and blue-eyed Pallas sped me hence.'

“He spoke and vanished back to Hades' realms.

But I remained still there, that I might see 790
The heroes who in former ages fell :
And I could well have seen them as I wished,
Pirithous and Theseus, those famed chiefs
Sprung from the gods ; but ere they met my view
The kindred of the dead in thousands came, 795
And flocked around me with terrific din :
Wan terror seized me, lest from Hades' depths
The dread Persephoné should launch at me
The awful horror of the Gorgon's head.
So to my ship I hastened back again 800
And ordered my companions to embark,
And to cast off the hawsers ; they obeyed,
And took their seats in order on the thwarts ;

And on the heaving tide the ship was borne

Adown the ocean's stream; at first with oars 805

And afterwards before a gentle breeze.

BOOK XII.

—
ARGUMENT.

Conclusion of tale of Ulysses—Departure from Circe—The Sirens—Scylla and Charybdis—The Sun-god's oxen—Wreck—Ulysses alone reaches Calypso's Island.

DAY 35.

“AND when the ship had left the Ocean stream
She crossed the surge of the far-stretching sea,
And reached *Ææa's* isle: there is the seat
Of the rathe Dawn; thence in her aëry dance
She issues forth: there are the springs of light. 5
And there we beached the ship upon the sands,
And landed on the margin of the sea;
And weary slept until the dawn of day.
“And when the rosy-fingered dawn appeared
I sent my comrades on to Circe's halls 10
To fetch the dead Elpenor's corse to us:
And logs of wood we cut, shedding hot tears,

And on a lofty headland raised his pyre.
When we had sadly burned his arms and corse,
We reared his tomb, crowned with a monument, 15
And on its summit fixed his shapely oar.

“All this we did; but Circe knew right well
Of our return from Hades; soon she came
Bravely arrayed; her maidens followed her
With bread and viands, and bright ruby wine: 20
The lovely goddess then addressed us all:

‘Of reckless courage are ye, who alive
Have sought the realms of Hades: twice to die,
When other human beings die but once!
But eat and drink to-day; by early dawn 25
Sail onward; I will point you out your course,
And show each danger; lest by evil chance
Ye suffer other woes by land or sea.’

“She spoke, her wish we readily obeyed,
And all that day till sunset we sat there 30
Feasting on plenteous cheer, and fragrant wine:
And when the sun went down, and darkness fell,
My comrades laid them down and took their rest,
Close by the hawsers, which held fast the ship.

She led me by the hand away from them, 35
And made me sit; and lay down by my side
And our adventures asked; I told her all.
Then Circe the divine addressed me thus:
'These dangers now are past, but listen next
To all I have to tell thee; and may God 40
Fix all I tell thee in thy memory.
"First thou wilt reach the Sirens, who bewitch
All human beings who approach their shore:
Him who draws near them in his ignorance,
Who hears unwarned the Sirens' voice and song, 45
No wife will ever greet; his tender babes
Will ne'er be gladdened by his home return:
On the green mead the Sirens sit and sing,
With chant bewitching; and around in heaps
Are piled the bones of men from which the flesh 50
Has rotted; and there moulder their remains.
Row swiftly by them; all thy comrades' ears
Stop thou with wax from the sweet honey-comb;
Lest haply one of them may hear their song.
But thou may'st hear them, if such be thy wish: 55
If thy companions bind thee hand and foot

And lash thee to thy galley's mast with ropes,
Thou may'st delight thee with the Sirens' song:
If thou entreat thy crew to set thee free,
They must not listen to thy hest or prayer; 60
But bind thee faster still, with yet more bonds.

“‘ And when thy crew have rowed thee past this
snare,

I need not tell thee what thy course must be,
But thou thyself decide this in thy mind;
The danger I point out on either hand. 65

On one side rocks arise, with beetling crest
Against whose base is hurled the mighty wave
Resounding, of the blue-eyed Amphitrite:

Planctæ, the Shifting rocks, the gods them call:
No wingèd fowl can safely o'er them fly, 70

No, not the gentle doves who pass that way
Bringing ambrosia to Father Jove;

But one of them against the scarpèd cliff
Is to destruction hurled; but Father Jove
Creates another to replace the lost. 75

No bark with mortal crew can pass thereby,
But floating on the wave are planks of ships

And bodies of dead men; and from the depths
Belch forth the flames of the infernal fire.
Of ships which glide across the heaving tide, 80
The only one which safely steered this course
Was famous Argo from Æetes sailing :
She had been cast upon the dreadful rocks
Had it not been for Juno's mighty aid
Who for the sake of Jason pushed her through. 85
“ ‘ And on the other hand two crags are seen ;
The one to heaven raises its sharp peak,
On which a lurid cloud for ever sits,
Which never rolls away ; in heat or cold
Its crest is never seen in the clear air : 90
No mortal man could climb it, or descend,
If he had twenty hands and twenty feet ;
Smooth is the crag as if it polished were :
And half-way up its face, a gloomy cave
Opens its jaws towards dark Erebus. 95
And past this rock steer thou thy gallant bark
O noble chief : a man in pride of strength
Shooting an arrow from thy vessel's deck
Could not the cavern's deep abysses reach ;

There Scylla dwells, with howlings terrible, 100
A dog-like yelling in her dreadful voice,
Herself a portent fearful to behold,
A god would quail to cast his eyes on her;
Twelve shapeless feet she has, six outstretched necks
On each an awful head, with thickset teeth 105
In triple rows, fraught with the gloom of death;
She lurks half-hidden in the vaulted cave,
And from its dread abyss she stretches forth
Her heads; and watches all around the rock
Fishing for dolphins, sharks, or mighty whales, 110
And these in thousands Amphitrité rears,
The goddess of the ever moaning sea.
No voyagers e'er can hope to steer their bark
Unscathed by her; with each of her six heads
She will a sailor seize from out the crew 115
And drag him from the dark prowed ship; her prey.

“‘The other rock, Ulysses, thou wilt see
Is not so steep; and near the other lies;
About a bowshot do they stand apart;
On it a fig-tree grows with verdant leaves, 120
And under it the weird Charybdis boils,

And sucks the pitch-black water down again :
Thrice in the day she vomits forth the waves,
And thrice devours them in her awful gulf :
Approach not thou her vortex ; from her maw 125
Earth-shaking Neptune could not rescue thee :
But steer thy galley close to Scylla's rock,
And hug that shore ; 'twere better far for thee
To lose six comrades from thy gallant crew,
Than ship and all her crew to sacrifice.' 130

“She spoke, and thus in turn I questioned her :
‘But, goddess, wilt thou tell me this in truth ;
Is it not possible I may escape
The fell Charybdis, and beat back with arms
The other, when she pounces on my crew?’ 135

“I spoke, the lovely goddess thus replied :
‘Reckless thou art, and hast no other thoughts
But warlike exploits and heroic deeds !
To the immortals wilt not thou submit ?
No mortal she, but an immortal woe ; 140
Awful and dread and fierce ; invincible ;
Making all arms ridiculous ; from her
The truest courage is to take to flight.

For if thou stay thy course along the rock
And arm thyself for fight, she will launch forth, 145
I fear, those heads again, and from thy crew
Will seize as many as she seized before:
So row thou swiftly on, and make thy prayer
To Scylla's mother, the Terrific one,
She who brought forth that scourge for mortal men, 150
That she restrain her from a second swoop.

“ ‘Then thou wilt reach the isle Trinacria:
The Sun god's oxen, and his goodly sheep
In numbers thou wilt see there pasturing;
Seven herds of oxen, and of thriving sheep 155
Seven flocks; with fifty in each flock and herd:
No increase is there ever to the breed,
Nor do their numbers fail; and goddesses
Their guardians are; two nymphs with waving locks,
Whom fair Neæra to the Sun god bare, 160
Both Phaetusa and Lampetia;
Their mother nourished them with tenderness;
And sent them to remote Trinacria's isle,
To guard their father's oxen and his sheep.

“ ‘If thou wilt leave these flocks inviolate, 165

And turn thy thoughts to nought but home return,
Ye all may reach your Ithaca again ;
Though on the way much ill ye may endure :
But if thou spoil the flocks, I prophesy
Destruction to thy comrades and thy ship : 170
And if thou 'scape thyself, thy home return
Will be delayed, and with disaster fraught,
And thy companions all will be destroyed.'

"She spoke, the dawn shoné from her golden throne ;
Then through the isle the goddess bent her way 175
And left me there : while I my footsteps turned
Towards my ship, and stirred my comrades up
To go on board, and cast the hawsers off ;
They went on board and sat upon the thwarts,
And beat the grey salt water with their oars. 180
Circe, dread goddess of the waving locks,
And voice melodious, sent us a fair breeze ;
A good companion, which swelled out our sails,
Following the wake of the dark-beakéd ship :
On board of her we made the tackle fast 185
And lay down at our ease ; while favoring gale
And steersman kept her steady to her course :

Then with sad heart my comrades I addressed :

“‘It is not just that one or two of you,
 My comrades dear, and only those should know, 190
 The fate which Circe has foretold to me ;
 But I will tell you all, that not unwarned,
 We may face death, or shun our threatened doom ;
 And first she warns us how we may escape
 The spell bewitching of the Sirens’ voice, 195
 And shun the flowery mead in which they dwell :
 She says that I alone may hear their voice ;
 But ye must bind me fast, with straitest bonds,
 And lash me standing upright to the mast,
 So that I cannot stir ; if I entreat, 200
 And lay command on you to set me free,
 Then bind me faster yet, with yet more cords.’

“As thus I told them what we had to do,
 Our gallant ship, sped by the favoring gale,
 Approached without delay the Sirens’ isle : 205
 Then fell the breeze, there was a breathless calm ;
 Some spirit stilled and lulled the waves to rest :
 My crew jumped up in haste to furl the sails,
 And lowered them in the hold ; and with the oars

Of well-shaped fir, the wave they churned to foam. 210
Then from a cake of beeswax I cut off
A portion with my sword; and with strong hands
I kneaded it, and soon it soft became,
And yielded to my strength, and to the rays
Of the bright Sun-god, from Hyperion sprung; 215
With this I stopped up my companions' ears:
Then in the ship they bound me hand and foot
And lashed me standing upright to the mast,
While with the oars they beat the hoary sea.

“And when we speeding swiftly neared the isle,
And were no farther distant from the shore 221
Than a loud shout could reach; the gliding ship
Could not pass by the Sirens unobserved
As she approached they raised their clear sweet song:

“‘Ulysses, famous Chief, thy galley stay, 225
Thou glory of the Greeks, and turn aside,
That thou may'st listen to our tuneful lay:
For ne'er in black-hulled ship did mortal glide
Close to our haunt across the heaving tide,
But fain must yield to the delicious spell 230

“ And when we left the island far behind
We saw smoke rise above the swelling wave, 250

And a terrific noise smote on our ears :
The oars dropped from my comrades' trembling hands,
The blades fell splashing dragged against the tide ;
Stood still the ship ; for now no more the men
Strained with their arms upon the tapering oar : 255
I rushed along the decks to rouse my crew,
To each of them I spoke with cheering words :
 " ' Comrades, are we untrained to peril now ?
No greater danger threatens us, than when
The Cyclops shut us in his vaulted cave, 260
With savage violence ; but e'en from thence,
Thanks to my valour, foresight, and address,
We 'scaped ; and we may live to talk of this ;
Pay strict attention now to my commands :
Ye oarsmen keep your seats, and with your oars 265
Strike deep the broken water ; Jove may grant
That e'en this danger we may yet escape ;
And to thee steersman, these are my commands,
And heed them carefully : for with thy hands
Thou dost direct the helm of our stout ship : 270
To all the smoke and broken water there
Give a wide berth ; but do thou hug those rocks :

If from this course thou swerve in heedlessness

On wreck and ruin thou wilt cast us all.'

"I spoke, they quickly my commands obeyed: 275

I dared not mention Scylla to them then,

That hopeless terror; lest in utter fear

My crew should drop their oars, and skulk below.

Then Circe's mandate, not to arm myself

Which vexed me sorely, I could not obey; 280

I went below and donned my rattling mail;

And with two massive javelins in my hand,

I took my post upon the foremost deck,

Close by the prow: there first I hoped to see

Scylla, the fearful dweller of the rock, 285

Who to my comrades would destruction bring.

But nothing could I see; although my eyes

I wearied, gazing at the gloomy cliff.

"We steered in sadness through the narrow gorge;

On this side Scylla; on the other hand 290

The weird Charybdis in her vortex dire

Whirled down the water of the salt sea flood;

When she belched forth, the seething water boiled

As in a cauldron on a glowing fire;

The foam rose high in air, and fell in showers 295
E'en on the topmost peaks on either hand :
And when she sucked the water down again,
The seething vortex boiled, and all around
The rocks resounded ; the abyss disclosed
The bottom of the sea, and dark brown sand 300
Beneath ; my comrades all were pale with fear.
All eyes were turned towards this peril nigh,
When Scylla pounced upon us ; from my ship
Six of my crew she seized and bore away,
The strongest and the bravest of them all : 305
As inboard on my crew I turned my eyes
I saw them in mid air, with hands and feet
They vainly struggled in her fearful clutch,
And shrieked my name in their last agony.
" Thus stands the fisher on the jutting crag, 310
And with his tapering rod throws forth the bait
Into the water, the small fish to snare ;
His quivering prey he jerks back to the shore :
Thus they went quivering upwards in her grasp,
And she devoured them in the cavern's mouth ; 315
Shrieking and stretching forth their hands to me

In their dread torture; the most rueful sight
That e'er my eyes were fated to behold
In all my wanderings over the salt sea.

“ When dread Charybdis, Scylla, and the rocks, 320
And all these dangers we had left behind,
To the god's lovely island we drew near.
There were the oxen with broad stately brows,
There browsed the many flocks of goodly sheep,
Of the Hyperion Sun-god: o'er the sea 325
I heard the oxen lowing in their stalls,
And the sheep bleating: then I called to mind
What the blind Seer Tiresias had said,
And what *Ææan* Circe had foretold;
How they had warned me strictly to avoid 330
The island of the ever genial sun:
With anxious mind my comrades I addressed:
‘Hearken to me, companions of my woes,
That I may tell you what Tiresias
And what *Ææan* Circe have foretold: 335
How they have warned me strictly to avoid
The island of the ever gladsome sun;
Since a most dreadful ill awaits us there.

So past the island row our black hulled ship.'

"These words I said, their heart within them sank;

With moody speech Eurylochus replied : 341

'Ulysses, thou art harsh, thy strength and nerve

Are more than man's; thy limbs know not fatigue;

Compact of iron are thy frame and will :

Thy comrades, worn with toil and sleeplessness, 345

Thou wilt not suffer to put foot on shore :

And here upon this sea-girt isle at hand

We might prepare our comfortable meal !

But no ! thou drivest us to wander on

Through all the wretched night; and from the isle

To turn our course toward the stormy sea, 351

At night; when stormy winds, the bane of ships,

Are all abroad; and how could we escape

If suddenly a tempest fall on us

From South or gusty West? those fatal winds, 355

Which wreck the ships spite of the gods themselves.

Let us obey the best of dusky night,

And beach our ship, and take our meal by her;

And with the dawn launch o'er the mighty deep.'

"Thus spoke Eurylochus, his comrades all 360

Approved his speech; and I began to see
That fate had yet more woes in store for us;
Then I addressed them with these wingèd words:
'Eurylochus, ye force me now to yield,
Since ye are many, and I stand alone; 365
But swear now all of you a mighty oath,
If herds of oxen, and vast flocks of sheep,
We hap to find, that none of you will dare
With sacrilegious wickedness to slay
Or ox or sheep; but that ye will content 370
To eat the food which Circe gave to us.'

"I spoke, they took the oath as I required:
When they had sworn with all solemnity,
Within a land-locked cave we brought the ship,
Fresh water near; my comrades went on shore, 375
And busily prepared the evening meal.
When we with food and drink were satisfied,
We then bethought us of our comrades dear,
And wept for them whom from our gallant ship
Scylla had torn, and cruelly devoured; 380
And gentle sleep fell on us while we wept.

"When the third watch was come; and when the stars

Were sliding down the sky, almighty Jove,
Who sits among the thunder clouds, stirred up
In a fierce hurricane the stormy wind ; 335
Shrouded in driving mist the earth and heaven
And from the heavens night sent sweeping down.
And when the rosy-fingered dawn arose,
Born of the prime ; we made our ship secure
And dragged her underneath an arch'd cave ; 390
There are the haunted cells where dance the nymphs.
Then thus I spoke to my assembled crew :
' Dear friends, we have enough to eat and drink
On board our gallant ship ; these flocks and herds
Let us not touch, lest evil fall on us ; 395
They are the oxen and the goodly sheep
Of the dread Sun-god, the omniscient,
Who sees all things on earth, and all things hears.'
" I spoke, their minds were swayed by what I
said :
For a whole month the South wind blustered still, 400
Without a lull ; there was no change of wind,
Except a veering from the South to East.
" As long as they had food and ruddy wine,

They spared the oxen, and had due regard
For life and safety; but when all the store 405
Of victuals which the ship contained was gone,
They strayed about the isle in sore distress
Hunting for game, for fish or feathered fowl,
Whatever came to hand; and captured them
With curv'd hooks; hunger their entrails gnawed. 410
I went a lonely path to supplicate
The gods; that one would deign to be my guide.
When from my comrades I had quite withdrawn,
Where I could find a shelter from the wind,
I bathed my hands in water, and I prayed 415
To all the gods who in Olympus dwell:
And they sweet sleep upon my eyelids strewed.
While I was absent thus, Eurylochus
This evil counsel to my comrades gave:
'Hearken to me, companions in distress, 420
To wretched mortals, death in all its shapes
Must miserable be; but worst of all
Is death by hunger's lengthened agony;
Therefore the choicest heifers let us seize
Of all the Sun-god's herds; and slay and eat, 425

And sacrifice them to the gods above :
And if we reach our own dear Ithaca,
Our native land, on our arrival there
A splendid temple we will consecrate
To the Hyperion Sun-god ; beautified 430
With many sacred offerings rich and rare.
If for his oxen with high branching horns
He be so vexed that he destroy our ship,
And all the gods allow his wrath full sway ;
So let it be ; and let me die at once, 435
And rather perish choking in the wave,
Than die by inches in this desert isle.'

“ Thus spoke Eurylochus, they all approved :
The choicest heifers of the Sun-god's herds
They drove towards the ship with beak'd prow ; 440
For nigh at hand the beauteous oxen grazed,
Of trailing hoof, and broad and stately brow.
They stood around them praying to the gods
And from the lofty crested oak they plucked
The tender leaves ; for in the gallant ship 445
No barley of the golden grain was left.
When they had prayed, the heifers then they slew

And flayed them; and the haunches they cut off,
And these with fat were covered twice; thereon
The slices from the limbs were duly laid. 450
They had no wine for the burnt sacrifice,
Therefore with water they libations made,
And on the roasted entrails sprinkled it;
Soon as the haunches they had duly burnt,
And tasted the choice morsels, all the rest 455
They cut in portions small, and pierced with spits.

“Then gentle slumber from my eyelids fled;
Along the margin of the sea in haste
I bent my steps; as I approached the ship,
Which to the oar stroke swings to either hand, 460
The savoury odour of the sacrifice
Was wafted towards me in the air; I groaned
And cried with passion to the immortal gods:

“‘O father Jove, and all ye other gods
Who live in bliss; why have ye lulled me off 465
For my destruction in that fatal sleep,
While my companions whom I left, alas!
Have consummated this dread sacrilege?’

“Lampetia, with robes behind her flying,

To the Hyperion Sun-god swiftly went, 470

To tell him how we had his oxen slain ;

In anger the immortals he addressed :

“ ‘ O father Jove, and all ye other gods

Who dwell in endless bliss, your vengeance bring

On the companions of Laertes' son ; 475

Who in their reckless disregard of me,

Have slain my oxen ; in which I rejoiced

When I ascended to the starry heaven,

And when from heaven I turned to earth again :

If for my oxen ye will not inflict 480

A retribution just, I will descend

To Hades' realms, and shine among the dead.' ”

“ Then Jove who piles the thunder clouds replied :

“ ‘ Still on the Immortals shed thy beams, O Sun,

And light the joyous earth for mortal men ; 485

Soon will I with my flashing thunderbolt

Shiver their bark to splinters in mid sea.' ”

“ The fair Calypso with the waving locks

Related this to me ; which she had heard

Herself from Hermes, the immortal Guide. 490

“ And when I reached the ship by the sea shore,

My comrades blamed each other bitterly :
Past remedy it was, the beasts were slain.
On these the gods showed forth their prodigies ;
The flayed hides crawled about ; and on the spits 495
The flesh began to low ; the roast and raw
Gave forth a voice as from a living ox.

“Six days my comrades held their feast : and ate
The choicest heifers of the Sun-god’s herds.
But when great Jove, son of the Ancient one, 500
Brought round the seventh day, the wind was lulled,
And ceased to scour the seas with its fierce breath.
We launched upon the bosom of the deep,
And raised the mast, and spread the snow-white sails.
But when we left the isle, and saw no more 505
The land, but nothing save the sea and sky ;
Then Saturn’s son raised up a lurid cloud,
Which hung above our hollow bark ; below
The sea grew dark with its portentous shade.
Not long the ship ran, on her course, for soon 510
A howling storm came rushing from the West :
Both the fore-stays were snapped by its fierce blast ;
Back fell the mast ; its rigging and its gear

Were tumbled in the hold ; and in its fall
It struck the steersman on the after deck 515
Full in the head, and battered in his skull ;
And like a diver overboard he fell
Headlong ; his spirit left its mortal frame.
Then Jove let loose his thunder ; with his bolt
He smote our bark ; which reeled beneath the stroke
Of Jove's dread levin-brand ; with sulphurous fume 521
She reeked, my comrades overboard were hurled,
Like sea-birds floating on the heaving waves
They swam around the black hull of the ship ;
The god snatched from us hope of home return. 525
 "I paced the middle deck, till from the sides
The billow ripped the keel, and swept it off
Shorn of its timbers, and away from it
The mast was torn adrift ; on the masthead
Still hung the back-stay, made of leathern hide ; 530
With this I lashed together keel and mast,
And on this raft was borne by the fierce storms.
Then soon the West wind stayed its fiery breath ;
The North arose, and with it dread for me,
Lest I should drift back to Charybdis' isle. 535

“All night I drifted; with the rising sun,
I came close under Scylla’s rock again,
And fell Charybdis; which engulfed the waves:
As the gulph yawned beneath me, I sprang up
And seized the lofty fig-tree; to its boughs 540
I clung as would a bat; nor could I find
Hold for my feet, or swing myself aloft:
Deep were the roots below from which it grew,
And the long mighty boughs hung out of reach,
And o’er Charybdis stretched their shadowy arms. 545
I clung with desperation, yet with hope,
That mast and keel might be hurled forth again:
And as I waited hoping, they appeared
At last; a weary while it seemed to me,
As to a hungry judge his supper time, 550
Who all day long has sat deciding suits:
So long it seemed to me, until again
The timbers from Charybdis floated up.
With hand and foot I hastily swung down.
And with a plunge dropped down beside the spars, 555
And scrambling on them paddled with my hands;
The father of the gods and men vouchsafed

That Scylla should not see me ; otherwise
From sheer destruction I had ne'er escaped.

“ During nine days I floated on the deep ; 560
On the tenth night the gods cast me on shore
Upon Ogygia's island ; the abode
Where dwells Calypso of the locks so fair ;
The mighty goddess with melodious voice.
She tenderly received and cherished me 565
With loving care ; but why repeat my tale ?
For in thy palace only yesterday
I told all this to thee and thy fair spouse ;
’Tis irksome to repeat a once told tale.”

1/2 Newkirk
 Grand



This book should be returned to the Library on or before the last date stamped below.

A fine of five cents a day is incurred by retaining it beyond the specified time.

Please return promptly.